

4

PRACTICAL
DISCOURSES
On All the
PARTS and OFFICES
OF THE
LITURGY
OF THE
Church of England.

Wherein are laid open the HARMONY,
EXCELLENCE, and USEFULNESS of
its Composure.

Useful for all FAMILIES.

VOLUME the SECOND and THIRD:

By MATTHEW HOLE, B.D.
Prebendary of the Church of Wells, and Vicar
of Stokegursey in Somersetshire.

1 Cor. XIV. 12. latter part.
Seek that ye may excel to the Edifying of the Church.

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VOLUME the SECOND.

By MATTHEW HOLE, B.D.
Prebendary of the Church of Wells, and Vicar
of Stokegursey in Somersetshire.

Eph. vi. 18.

3 L e

Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the
Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance,
and Supplication for all Saints.

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. D. for T. VARNAM and J. OSBORN in Lombard-street, W. TAYLOR at the Ship in Pater-noster-Row, H. CLEMENTS at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-yard, and J. BROWNE without Temple-Bar. M.DCC.XV.

PRACTICAL
DISCOURSES

On All the
P A T E



Volume the Second.

By MATTHEW HOLE, B.L.
Proprietor of the Clerks of Newgate
and of the Clerks of the Prison.

B. 1718.

London: Printed for J. O. and T. ALLEN, and sold at
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Office of the Clerks of Newgate, and at the
Office of the Clerks of the Prison.

T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,

G E O R G E

Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells.

Wise Justice the Abrogation of

My Lord, the kind Acceptance
of the Second Part of the
Catechism hath found
in the World, under
the happy Influence of Your
Lordship's Patronage, hath

iv *The DEDICATION.*

encourag'd me to send abroad the following Discourses on the *Litany* under the shadow and shelter of the same Wing, as the best Guard against the Censure and Assaults of any Adversaries.

For few will presume to arraign or attack that which hath the Passport of your Protection ; nor will many venture so far to expose their own Judgment, as to condemn what passes the Approbation of yours.

Indeed, Our Excellent and Comprehensive *Litany* is so admirably framed and worded, that the whole Christian Church cannot shew a more Pious and Pathetick Piece of Devotion ; and is therefore justly esteem'd the Glo-

ry of our own, and the Admir-
ation of other Churches.

They that desire to worship
God in Spirit and in Truth, can-
not be better assisted, than by this
Excellent Part of our Liturgy,
the devout Prayers whereof merit
and call for our frequent Atten-
dance; and nothing but the Igno-
rance of some, the Supineness of
others, and the Love of Novelty
in most, can make any to neglect
or despise them.

However, since too many such
there are, 'tis requisite to call in
the Aid and Assistance of Autho-
rity, to encourage and enforce
them; which is a Matter worthy
the Care of the Fathers, and the
Concurrence of all the Sons of
the Church.

Nor may we doubt YOUR
LORDSHIP's favouring of those
Prayers, wherein your High and
Holy Order, together with all
other Orders, Ranks, and Condi-
tions of Men, are constantly re-
member'd and recommended to
the Throne of Grace.

That these Petitions may be all
offer'd up with true and ardent
Devotion, and answer'd with suita-
ble Returns of the Divine Ble-
fings, is the hearty Wish and
Prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Humbly Devoted Servant,

MATTHEW HOLE.

THE

P R E F A C E.

IT WILL be needless to commend to the Reader the Subject of these Discourses, the LITANY of the Church of England: which sufficiently commends it self, by its own Worth. The Fulness of the Matter contain'd in it, the Conciseness of the Expressions in which it is deliver'd, the Piety of the Petitions of which it consists, together with the Extensiveness of them all to the Wants of all sorts of Persons, set it far above any thing of that kind in the Christian World; and all that bring ardent Desires and good Affections in the Use of it, find and feel by Experience the exceeding great Benefit and Comfort of it.

viii THE PREFACE.

But because some, thro Ignorance or Inadvertence, have rais'd some empty Cavils and Scruples against the manner of the Composure, it may not be amiss to shew the well-meaning Reader the Vanity and Weakness of them.

Some object against the Peoples having so large a share in it, by alternate Petitions; whereas the Minister is to be the Mouth of the People, to make their Requests known unto God; and the Scripture mentions only the Peoples saying Amen in the Close.

This Objection being already answer'd at large, Vol. I. p. 191, &c. where the Authority, the Antiquity, the Usefulness, and the Expediency of the Peoples bearing a part in the publick Prayers, is fully and clearly demonstrated; I refer the Reader to it.

Others again charge the Saying, Have Mercy upon us, miserable Sinners, three or four times in the Invocations; and Good Lord deliver us, seven or eight times in the Deprecations; and We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord, one and twenty times in the Intercessions, for vain Repetitions, and such as our Saviour sharply rebuk'd both in the Heathens and the Pharisees.

This

This Objection is likewise answer'd, p. 305, 306. of that Volume, and more fully in the second Part of Letters, p. 132, 133, &c. where 'tis observ'd, that the thrice repeating, Have Mercy upon us, miserable Sinners, is a particular Address to each of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity, and the fourth to the whole Trinity in general: and sure none that believe and worship the Trinity can take this for a vain Repetition, especially proceeding from Earnestness and Affection, like our Saviour's thrice repeating those words about the bitter Cup, Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me, &c.

Again, the same Words, when apply'd to different and fresh Matter, is no vain Repetition. Indeed, if that Form of Deprecation, Good Lord deliver us, so often repeated, were every time apply'd to one and the same thing, it might look like a vain Repetition; but being still joined to some new Matter, that is, some different Errit of Sin or Punishment, from which we pray to be deliver'd, 'tis far from it. And the same may be said of that Form of Supplication, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord; which being put up every time for some distinct Grace or Mercy, cannot be reckon'd a vain Repetition,

xi THE PREFACE.

petition, no more than David's repeating His Mercy endureth for ever, six and thirty times in one Psalm, upon various and different Occasions, may be accounted such.

But there is one Objection more against the Litany that must be remov'd, and that is, the cutting it into so many small Shreds or short Ejaculations, wherein the People say half the Prayers, and seem to be the only Petitioners in the greatest part of them; whereas they take a continu'd Prayer, atten'd and offer'd up by the Minister alone, who is appointed for that purpose, to be more edifying, and better to answer the Ends of true Devotion.

But this is affirm'd without any Reason, and against the Sense and Experience of the best and wisest Men in these Exercises for great Intention of Mind, and such as should go along with our Prayers, spend the Spirits too fast to continue long; and therefore 'tis impossible to keep up that height of Affection and Devotion in a long Prayer, which we may in a short: for Experience shews us, that Length and Tedium blunt the Edg of the Mind, and make it grow weary and impatient; whereas Breaks and Interruptions call upon the Mind afresh, and renew its Vigour and Intention. And therefore many short

The PREFACE. xi

short Prayers and pithy Ejaculations, darted from
a pious and devout Heart, will go farther, and
pierce deeper than one continu'd Harangue, where
the People have no Part, and can scarce say
Amen.

Thus having clear'd our way to the Litany,
by removing the Obstacles and Objections rais'd
against it; I proceed to the Explication of the
several Parts and Paragraphs of it: in which
all good Christians will bid me God speed; to
whom I shall say always, The Lord prosper
them, we wish them good Luck in the
Name of the Lord.

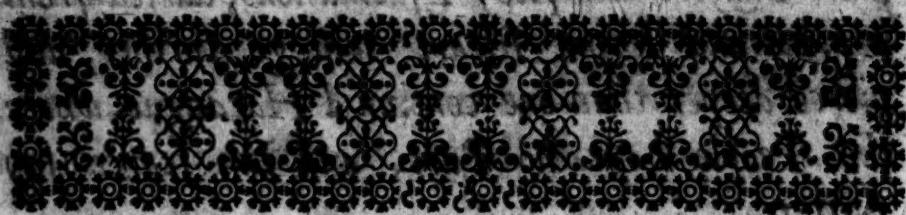
УИАТИЛ

DISCOURSE
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
1851.



On the Declensions in the YUGA-TI.

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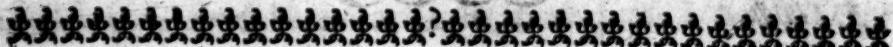


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God be merciful to me a Sinner.

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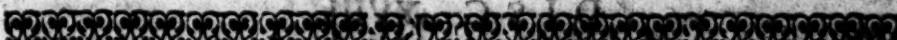
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in this book stand on what it does for us. How shall we fulfil his command? How shall we fulfil his command? What is the spirit? That is the spirit of invocatory occasions in the



Supplications; like the poor I often in this Text, who come before you in my place of Heaven.

On the INVOCATIONS in the
LITANY.

God be merciful to me a Sinner.

DISCOURSE I.

St. LUKE xviii. 9. latter part.

God be merciful to me a Sinner.

The Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner.



ROM the daily and ordinary Sacrifice of Morning and Evening Prayer, together with the Creed of St. Athanasius, which is once a Month appointed to be rehearsed in it; I proceed in the next place, as the Liturgy leads us, to the Litany, which is three times in the Week made a part of our Morning-Service. And because the People have a larger share in this, than in any other part of Divine Service, being to say each Individually after the Minister, and to join with him in every Passage of it; 'twill be requisite to explain every Part of it to them, that they may the better pray with the Understanding.

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES ON

For the word *Litany*, tho it be no where met with in Holy Scripture, yet the Sense and Drift of it is often found there, and it frequently occurs in the Writings of the Ancient Fathers.

For the Sense of it, it signifies an humble and earnest Supplication for Mercy, from a deep sense of the Want of it, and our Misery without it. Wherefore I stile it,

1. *An humble Supplication*, being to be offer'd up upon our knees, the Gesture of Humility, and the Posture of Supplicants; like the poor Publican in the Text, who could scarce lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven.

2. *An earnest Supplication*, being deliver'd with higher degrees of Zeal, Fervency and Importunity, than other Prayers; like him too, who smote upon his Breast with Earnestness and Compunction of Spirit.

3. I stile it an earnest Supplication for *Mercy*. This is the main distinguishing Petition of Litanies, which generally begin with *K'ree ἀλέην*, *Lord have mercy upon us*. Hence David's 51st Psalm, which begins with *Miserere mei Deus*, is by the Antients call'd his *Litany*; and so are the other Psalms, that begin with *Lord have mercy upon us*. And the poor Publican's Prayer here, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*, is stil'd a short Litany.

4. I call it an earnest Supplication for *Mercy*, from a deep sense of the Want of it, and our Misery without it. This is the true Motive of the Earnestness and Importunity us'd in these Supplications; for he that is not deeply sensible of his need of *Mercy*, and his great Misery without it, will not heartily or earnestly desire it. And therefore we read of the primitive Christians, that they chiefly us'd these Litanies in times of publick Calamities, to avert the Wrath of God, and to obtain his *Mercy* in seasons of greatest Exigence.

But to come to the Litany of our Church; That, by our Reformers extracting the Marrow and Quintessence of all the antient Litanies, by cutting off all that was superfluous, and retaining all that was sound and good in them, may be justly reckon'd the best of its kind in all the Christian World. For the Matter of it is pious and orthodox, the Method natural, easy, and entertaining; and the whole Composure fitted to elevate the Mind, and raise the Devotion both of Minister and People.

In speaking to it, I shall observe the four Parts into which it is usually divided:

First, An Invocation, or particular Address to each of the three Persons in the Trinity.

Secondly, Deprecations, or Prayers against all kinds of Evil.

Thirdly, Intercessions for all sorts and degrees of Men. And,

Fourthly, Petitions for all manner of Good. All which, for their Usefulness and Piety, will deserve our particular Consideration. And

I begin, *First*, as the Litany does, with the Invocation, or particular Address to each of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity; where all the three Persons are invoked by the peculiar Titles or Attributes ascrib'd to them in Holy Scripture.

The first Person is invok'd by the title of, *O God the Father of Heaven.*

The second by the title of, *O God the Son, Redeemer of the World.*

The third by the stile of, *O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son.*

After which, they are all invok'd together, in the general stile of, *O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God.*

To all which, the Matter of the Address, or the Thing requested of them, is one and the same; viz. *Have mercy upon us miserable Sinners.* Where the thing ask'd, is Mercy; the Subject with which all Litanies begin, as ours here doth. The Motive of asking it, is our Sin and Misery without it, as being at best but *miserable Sinners.*

I shall treat briefly at this time of all these things, from this short Litany of the poor Publican, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.* Where the Name of God being common to all the three Persons of the Trinity, I shall begin, as the Litany directs, with the peculiar Titles and Attributes that are given to each of them; and likewise shew, what influence they all have upon this Petition for Mercy. In the first place then;

The first Person in the Trinity is invoked by the name of, *O God the Father of Heaven;* and upon that account we beseech him to *have mercy upon us miserable Sinners.* Now *God is call'd the Father of Heaven;* not because that is his

peculiar Seat, as if the other Persons had not their residence there ; for *Heaven is God's Throne*, as including all the three Persons, and his Kingdom ruleth over all the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth : But he is more eminently stil'd *the Father of Heaven*, upon a double account.

1. Because he is the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible in both ; that is, he is the Father of Angels and Spirits, as well as of all other bodily Substances. Hence the Work of Creation is in Sacred Writ principally ascrib'd to God the Father, who is said to make all things in and by his Son, and with the Holy Ghost : And because Heaven is the most glorious piece of his Workmanship, he is therefore denominat'd by it, and call'd the Father of Heaven, for making that his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool. Again,

2. He is so call'd, because he ever inhabited those Heavenly Regions of Light and Glory, and never visibly descended upon earth in any bodily shape, as the Son and Holy Ghost have done. For which reason, he is here and elsewhere often stil'd, *our Father in Heaven*, or *our Heavenly Father* ; which was done, to raise our Affections to heavenly things, and to mind us that we serve that *High and Holy one, that inhabits Eternity, and dwelleth in that Light which is inaccessible, and to which no mortal Eye can approach*. Now from this Title we are here directed and encourag'd to go to him for Mercy ; for as he is a *Father*, he hath Bowels of Compassion, which incline him to pity and relieve his Children. As he is *the Father of Heaven*, he hath all Power and Ability so to do ; for if earthly Parents know how to give good Gifts unto their Children, how much more can *the Father of Heaven give good things to them that ask them*? In short, this Father of Heaven is the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation ; *he giveth us Life and Breath, and all Things* : and we daily depend upon his Bounty and Goodness. And therefore the Litany fitly leads us to him, to desire the Supply of all our Wants, and ardently to ask Mercy and Favour from him. To which end, it farther teaches us to acknowledg our selves miserable Sinners : *Have mercy upon us miserable Sinners*. We are Sinners, by breaking his Laws ; and we are miserable Sinners, by incurring all the Punishments due to the breach of them. We are Sinners against the Father of Heaven, by forgetting his Works, and the wonderful Things he hath done for us, by being unmindful of the Rock that begat us, and for-

forgetting the God that formed us ; by not glorifying God as our Creator and Preserver, nor regarding the Operations of his Hand : so that we may say, with the Prodigal, Father, we have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy Sons. Now these Sins committed against God the Father, have reduc'd us, like him, into a state of great Misery, from which nothing but his Mercy can rescue us : and therefore it must be proper, in the first place, to apply to him for Pardon and Forgiveness, and to say, as the Litany here directs, O God the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon us miserable Sinners. In the next place,

The second Person of the Trinity is invocated by the Titles of *God, the Son, Redeemer of the World* ; where the Name of God is given to him equally with the Father, and so doth the Holy Scripture in sundry places. St. Paul calls him, *God blessed for ever*, Rom. 9. 5. and elsewhere tells us, that he thought it no Robbery, or Usurpation, to be equal with God, Phil. 2. 6. The Author to the *Hebrews* brings in the Father, saying to him, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; a Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom.* And again, when he bringeth him into the World, he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship him*, Heb. 1. 6, 8. Where not only the Name, but the Divine Nature, and Divine Honours are ascrib'd to him ; which cannot be but to a Divine Person.

Next, He is here call'd upon by the Name of Son, *O God, the Son.* He is the Son of God the Father, not by Creation or Adoption, but by an eternal Generation, being begotten of him before all Worlds ; and so *God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one Substance with the Father, by whom all things were made* ; as the Nicene Creed describes him : or as the Apostle sets him forth, *He is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person* ; Heb. 1. 3.

But the main distinguishing Character in relation to us, is his being the Redeemer of the World ; *O God the Son, Redeemer of the World.* As the Works of Creation and Providence are made the peculiar Acts of God the Father, so the Works of Man's Redemption and Salvation are more especially ascrib'd to God the Son ; for he it was, who for us Men, and for our Salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,

and was made Man, and was crucify'd for us under *Pontius Pilate*: as our Creeds generally teach us. He took our Nature to atone for our Sins, and became the Son of Man, to make us the Sons of God. He empty'd himself of his Glory, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, merely to serve us; and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, for our Redemption. Because without shedding of Blood there is no Remission, he was content to shed his own Heart-Blood for us, and to make his Soul an Offering for Sin, to appease the Wrath of God, that was gone out against us, and to restore us to his lost Love and Favour: And since *God by him hath reconcil'd the World to himself*, he is truly and properly stil'd, *The Redeemer of the World*.

Now by this endearing Title we are here directed to make our particular Address to this Son of God, who hath done such great things for us. The Request we make to him, is the same that we made before to the Father; viz. to have mercy upon us: which we are the more embolden'd to ask, because as our Redeemer he hath tasted of Death, to obtain eternal Life and Salvation for us; and hath drank off the bitter Cup of God's Wrath, to free us from it. By this he hath redeemed us from the Power of our ghostly Enemies, and made us capable of all the glorious Liberties of the Sons of God; and we need not doubt his Readiness to have mercy upon us, who lived and died merely to obtain Mercy and eternal Redemption for us.

But to make this Petition the more prevalent, we are taught here to confess our selves to be miserable Sinners: And indeed so we are, not only against God the Father, but against his Son and our Saviour. We have sinned against him, by refusing the Tenders of Salvation made by him, by not closing so heartily as we should with the Terms of Peace and Reconciliation he hath made for us, by slighting his holy Ordinances, rejecting his Word, neglecting his Sacraments, and counting the Blood of the Covenant, by which we are sanctify'd, an unholy thing. These are great Offences committed more immediately against the Son of God, the second Person in the Holy Trinity, which have truly made us *miserable Sinners*: and without Repentance and Amendment, will make us miserable to all Eternity. For to sin against a Saviour, is to thrust Salvation from us; and who can save him, whom a Saviour himself cannot? This is the forlorn undone Condition of all wilful Despisers

of

of our Redeemer; they sin against the Remedy provided for them, and so there can remain nothing but a fearful looking for of Judgment. The sad Apprehensions hereof may very well drive us to a Saviour for Mercy and Pity; and because the Sense of Misery is the most prevailing Motive for Mercy, we are here directed to address to God the Son, Redeemer of the World, to have mercy upon us miserable Sinners. Moreover,

The third Person in the Trinity is in like manner invok'd, saying, *O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son.* Where the Holy Ghost is affirm'd to be a Person, not a Quality, Power, or Virtue residing in the Father and the Son, and deriv'd from both, as some would have it; for thole Actions, Affections, and Operations are ascrib'd to him, that belong only to an intellectual Person or Substance: for he is said to be griev'd, to intercede for us, and to search all things; which are such personal Actions and Affections, as no mere Quality of it self is capable of.

And as he is a Person, so is he here stil'd a Divine Person, having the Godhead equal and in common with the Father and the Son, and is said to be worship'd and glorify'd with both, *Mat. 4. 10.* which are those divine and peculiar Honour's that belong only to a Divine Person.

Again, 3dly, as the Holy Ghost is a Divine Person, so is he a Person distinct from the Father and the Son. This is to be believ'd against a sort of Hereticks, who confounded the three Persons of the Trinity, destroying the substantial Properties of each, and making them all but one Person under three different Names and Appellations,

But the Distinction of the Persons may be prov'd from the distinct Offices and Operations that are ascrib'd to each of them; as also from the Holy Ghost's proceeding from the Father and the Son, which is here made his distinguishing Title and Character. And this is affirm'd of him in sundry places of Holy Scripture: In *John 14. 16.* the Father is said to send him as a Comforter to his People, to abide with them for ever, and to support them in all their Afflictions. And *Chap. 15. 26.* this Comforter sent by the Father, is by our Saviour call'd the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, and testifieth of him. For which reason he is stil'd the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Father; being sent by and proceeding from him. And

8. PRACTICAL DISCOURSES ON

Chap. 16. ver. 7. this same Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is said to come likewise from the Son, who after his Departure out of the World, and ascending up into Heaven, sent him to instruct and comfort his Disciples; call'd therefore the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son, from his proceeding from both.

Now the Supplication we here make to this third Person in the Trinity, is the same we made to the two former, viz. to have mercy upon us, and for the same reason too, because we are miserable Sinners. And such we are against the Holy Ghost, as well as against the Father and the Son: for tho' we have not, it may be, fallen into the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, Mat. 12. 32. which the Apostle calls a Sin unto death, not to be pray'd for, 1 John 5. 16. yet the best of us have many other ways sinned against the Holy Ghost, and grieved this Holy Spirit, as by quenching his good Motions, by resisting his Calls, by neglecting his Gifts, contemning his Graces, rejecting his holy Comforts, and the like; which things make us miserable Sinners here, and lead to eternal Misery and Destruction hereafter: and therefore we have very great reason, with humble and penitent Hearts, to address to this Holy Spirit, and say, O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us miserable Sinners.

And now having made our particular Application for Mercy to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, singly and apart; we are, in the last place, directed to make a general Address to them altogether; saying, O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable Sinners.

This we find to be suitable to the antient Practice of the Catholick Church, which, after a solemn Invocation of each Person in the Godhead, join'd them all in one and the same Request for Mercy. And our Church here teaches us to imitate their Example by doing the same, and that for very good reason too; for every Sin we commit against any one Person in the Trinity, is committed against the rest; and the Mercy and Pardon we desire, must come from the whole: yea, and the Misery from which we expect to be reliev'd, proceeds not from any one Person singly, but from the joint and undivided Concurrence of the whole Trinity. So that these are not vain and impertinent Repetitions, as some weakly object; but are grounded upon such

the Invocations in the Litany.

such a Zeal and Importunity for Mercy, as is pleasing to God, and will be profitable to our selves.

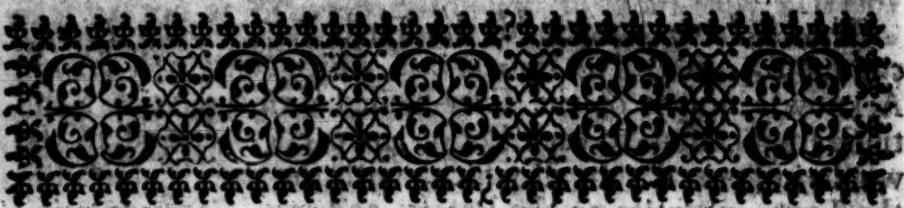
Thus I have consider'd the First Part of the *Litany*, commonly call'd, *The Invocation*; which contains a solemn Acknowledgment of the Ever-blessed Trinity, with a distinct Application to each Person in particular, and to the whole in general; in all which, with the poor Publican in the Text, we smite on the Breast, and cry, *God be merciful to us Sinners*: which prevail'd more for his Justification, than all the long Prayers of the proud *Pharisee*, who boasted of his Righteousness, and thank'd God that he was better than other Men.

Let us then in all Humility make this publick Profession of our Faith, and firmly adhere to it, against all Opposition; joining to it a hearty Confession of our Sins, and of our great Misery by reason of them: and then such fervent effectual Prayers will avail much to the obtaining of Mercy here, and of Glory hereafter. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the Merits of Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Might and Dominion, both now and for evermore.

Amen.



On



On the DEPRECATIONS in the LITANY.

DISCOURSE II.

JOEL ii. part of the 17th Verse.

Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach.



Finish'd the last time the First Part of the Litany, call'd the *Invocation*, or Supplications for Mercy from the whole Trinity, I come now to the Second Part, known by the name of *Deprecation*; containing what we are to pray against.

This begins with a humble Request for Forbearance, or the averting the just Punishment due to our Sins, in these words: *Remember not, Lord, our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our Sins; spare us good Lord, spare thy People, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious Blood, and be not angry with us for ever.* To which the People answer, *Spare us good Lord.* The Sense of which Words is contain'd in those of our Text; in both which, I shall observe and treat of these three things:

First, A Prayer against the just Punishment of our Sins, together with those of our Forefathers, so as not to take vengeance of them upon us; Remember not, Lord, our Offences, &c.

Secondly, A Prayer for Forbearance, with a Motive thereunto: Spare us good Lord, spare thy People, whom thou hast redeemed, &c.

Thirdly, A Prayer against retaining his Anger, and that his Wrath may cease from us; And be not angry with us for ever.

These things are to be distinctly and particularly handled: And,

First, Of the Prayer against the Remembrance of our Sins, and the Sins of our Forefathers; Remember not, Lord, our Offences, &c. To remember a thing, is to have still a fresh and lively Sense and Memory of it, so as to have it ready upon all occasions. To remember our Sins, is so to retain the Memory of them, as to give them their just Punishment, to keep them still upon the score, and to pay them that they have deserv'd. And consequently, not to remember our Sins, is to blot them wholly out of memory, and to remit all the Punishment due to them. Thus the pardoning of Sin is often express'd in Scripture by not remembering of it: *I, even I am he (faith God) that blotteth out thine Iniquities for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins*; Isa. 43. 25. When God promis'd to pardon the Sins of his own People, he pass'd an Act of general Oblivion upon them, in those words; *Their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more.* Not to remember a thing, is so to forget it, as to cast it out of mind and memory, and to lay it aside, as if it were not; and so doth God deal with our Sins, when he is pleas'd not to remember them. This we find David often and earnestly praying for; *O remember not the Sins of my Youth (faith he) nor my Transgressions: Remember thy Loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old; but forget all my Sins, and according to the multitude of thy Mercies remember me for thy Goodness sake*; Psal. 25. 6, 7. Thus our Church here teaches us to pray, *Remember not, Lord, our Offences*; to which it adds, *nor the Offences of our Forefathers*: for which we have the Example of holy David, Psal. 79. 8. *O remember not against us former Iniquities; or as some Translations read it, the Iniquities*

iniquities of them that were before us ; which must be the Iniquities of our Forefathers. And there is good reason for this Petition ; for God Almighty declares in the second Commandment, that he will visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him. History and Experience may inform us, that the Crimes of a former Age may be visited upon the succeeding, and that Men in future times have been great Sufferers for the Iniquities of those that went before them. Of this I might give you many Instances, in several of the Kings of Israel and Judah, who for their Idolatry were punish'd not only in their own Persons, but in their Posterity ; God recompensing the Iniquities of the Fathers into the Bosom of their Children, as we read, Jer. 32. 18. And since Posterity may be charg'd with the Guilt of their Predecessors, and suffer for their Iniquities, we fitly pray unto God not to remember them against us, nor to take vengeance upon us for theirs or our own Offences.

Hence we find the Church of God confessing and bewailing both, Jer. 14. 20. *We acknowledg, O Lord, our own Wickedness, and the Iniquity of our Fathers, for we have both sinned against thee : desiring him to blot them all out of the Book of Remembrance.*

I know some have vainly objected against this Passage in our Liturgy, as a praying for the Dead, and craving Mercy and Pardon for those, who are incapable of either.

But these Men ignorantly mistake the Meaning of this Petition, which is not intended as an Address in behalf of our Forefathers, who are laid up in their Graves, and so past receiving any benefit by our Prayers ; but in the behalf of our selves who survive them, that God would not lay any of their Sins to our charge, nor take vengeance upon us either for theirs or our own Offences : especially since God hath declar'd, that *the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, nor the Father the Iniquity of the Son ; but the Soul that sinneth, it shall die :* Ezek. 18. 20. Which must be understood of eternal Punishments, which none shall undergo but for his own Iniquities. But there are some temporal Punishments, which God many times defers from the Fathers to the following Generations, to see whether they will repent and amend ; which if they do, they shall go free ; but if they dance after their Pipe, and go on in the same Sins, then does God call them to a strict account, and take vengeance of both together : So that

the Deprecations in the Litany.

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that (as one hath well observ'd) God may punish us for Sins committed many years before we were born, because we renew them in our Lives, and act them over again. And this is what we deprecate or pray against in this Petition, when we say, *Remember not, Lord, our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our Sins.* From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To the Petition for Forbearance, in these words, *Spare us good Lord, spare thy People, whom thou hast redeem'd with thy most precious Blood.* To this God Almighty himself directed his own People by the Prophet Joel, who having, in the Verses before our Text, call'd them to Fasting and Mourning, as the best means to avert the heavy Judgments that threaten'd them, adds in the words of the Text, *Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach.* Where we have,

1. The Persons that are to make this Supplication, and they are the Priests and Ministers of the Lord, who are appointed not only to bless, but to intercede and make Atonement for the People; for they being to minister about holy things, are the Mouth of the People unto God, to receive and offer up their Prayers and Supplications unto him; which you know is religiously observ'd in all our solemn Addresses unto God.

2. We are here told what they are to do; let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, *weep*, that is, begin the Sorrow and Mourning upon those Occasions; their Example is to lead the way, and to be a Pattern and Direction to the People to follow: they are the Lights and Guides of the Flock, to shew and keep them in the right way; their Actions are exemplary and directive, and therefore should be always such, as are worthy of Imitation.

*Si vis me flere,
dolendum pri-
mum est ipse
tibi.*

3. We have the Place where this mournful Supplication was to be made, and that was *between the Porch and the Altar*; which is still observ'd in our Cathedral Churches, where the Litany is sung in the *Area*, between the Porch or Entrance into the Quire, and the Communion-Table.

4. We have the Petition they were to offer up, *Let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage unto*

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unto Reproach. The Sense of which Petition is still continu'd in our Prayers, and is thus express'd, *Spare us good Lord, spare thy People, &c.* where the Supplication is twice repeated, to shew the Earnestness and Importunity of the Suit. Now to beg of God to spare us, implies,

(1.) A Confession of our Guilt, and that we deserve to be punish'd; for a guiltless Person needs not to desire to be spar'd, his own Innocence is a sufficient Guard and Protection against all just Punishment; 'tis only the Guilty and the Condemn'd Person that needs and cries for Mercy. So that in beseeching God to spare us, we acknowledg our selves guilty before God, and to have justly incur'd the direful Effects of his Displeasure. And indeed so we have; for our manifold Breaches and Violations of his Laws have render'd us obnoxious to his Justice, and our daily Provocations have justly kindled his Wrath and Indignation against us; and so we may well desire him to be *gracious unto us, and spare us.*

(2.) To beg God to spare us, signifies not only our Obnoxiousness to Punishment, but its Readiness to light upon us; that his Hand is lifted up, and just ready to strike; that his Judgments hang over our Heads, and are falling down upon us: and therefore, out of the Bitterness of our Soul, we cry to him to stop his Hand, and spare us: That tho' we are ripe for Vengeance, and Sentence of Death is pass'd upon us, yet we beg him to defer the Execution, and not to shower down his Vengeance upon us.

(3.) To desire God to spare us, is to beseech him to grant us a longer time for Repentance; that he wold not suddenly take us away, before we have made our Peace with God, and our Accounts ready. So David pray'd, *O spare me a little, that I may recover my Strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen;* Psal. 39. 13. In short, this Petition betokens a deep Sense of the Misery that is just coming upon us, with an earnest Request for Mercy, to remove or keep it off from us.

To move God Almighty hereunto, our Church here useth a double Argument to stir up his Compassion, and to be merciful unto us, and spare us: (1.) Because we are *his People:* And, (2.) Because we are a *People redeem'd with his Son's most precious Blood.*

For the 1st. We are his People in covenant with him, wherein he hath promis'd to be our God, and we to be his People; by virtue whereof he hath engag'd to remember us,

and take us for his, when he maketh up his Jewels, and will spare us, as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him; Mat. 3. 17. Besides which, our Saviour Christ hath made us his peculiar People, being call'd by his Name, and lifted in his Service: By virtue whereof we are,

2ly. A People redeem'd with his own most precious Blood. By this he hath bought us out of our Enemies hands, who had before carry'd us away captive; having deliver'd us from Sin, Satan, Death, and Hell, which had gotten the Power and Dominion over us. Hence the Apostle tells us, that we are not our own, being bought with a Price; and the dearest Price too that ever was given, even the precious Blood of the Son of God. So St. Peter tells us, I Pet. 1, 18, 19. Ye were not redeem'd with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot. No earthly thing could be a valuable Consideration for such a Purchase, it cost more to redeem a Soul, so that they must let that alone for ever; Psal. 49. 8. and therefore Christ was content to shed his own Blood, to obtain eternal Redemption for us.

Now the Apostle from hence excellently argues, He that spar'd not his own Son, but gave him to Death for us, how shall he not for his sake spare us, and freely give us all things? Rom. 8. 32.

Thus we see the meaning of the two first Petitions, of not rememb'ring ours or our Forefather's Offences, and sparing us from the Vengeance due to both. There remains yet

A Third Petition, which is to deprecate or pray against God's retaining his Anger against us, in these words, And be not angry with us for ever. This is fitly added to the former; for if God continues his Anger, it may and will upon occasion again break out against us: And therefore we find David often expostulating with God, Lord, how long wilt thou be angry? Shall thy Jealousy burn like Fire for ever? Psal. 79. 5. And, Psal. 85. 5. Wilt thou be displeas'd at us for ever? and wilt thou stretch out thy Wrath from one Generation to another? And to shew the Earnestness of his Desire of appeasing God's Anger, he again asks the Question, Lord, how long wilt thou hide thy self for ever? Shall thy Wrath burn like Fire? O remember how short my time is; wherefore hast thou made all Men for nought? Psal. 89. 45, 46. As all Joy and Comfort proceeds from the Light of God's Coun-

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Countenance, so nothing but Woe and Misery can come from the hiding of his Face: and as in his Pleasure is Life, so his Displeasure is attended with Death and Damnation; which made the Prophet *Isaiah* pray in the behalf of the Church, *Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember Iniquity for ever; behold, see we beseech thee, we are all thy People:* Isa. 64.9. Indeed we cannot too much deprecate the Wrath of God, which, like a consuming Fire, will burn and flame out against the Ungodly to all Eternity: And 'tis a fearful thing thus to fall under the Displeasure of the living God.

But here we must note, that we do not pray here, that God would never be angry with us, for that may sometimes tend to our Good, and be necessary for our Amendment; but that he would not be angry with us for ever, that his Wrath may not last too long, nor be incens'd too much against us; that he would not suffer his whole Displeasure to arise, but that his Anger may in due time cease from us. God cannot but be angry with Sin, which is an Affront to all his Attributes; nor will his Justice suffer him to let the Wicked go unpunish'd. But yet we pray, that he would not lay his Hand too heavy, or too long upon us; that tho' he visits us with the Rod, yet he would not take away his Loving-Kindness from us, but in the midst of Judgment, he would remember Mercy. And this of his great Goodness he is infinitely ready and inclin'd to do, for he is backward to punish, but forward to pardon; slow to Anger, but swift to shew Mercy.

Ad paenam tardus Deus est, ad premia velox.

To inflict Punishment is in Scripture stil'd his strange Work, which he is very unwilling to do, and nothing but the Importunity of Mens Crimes can draw him to it; but Acts of Mercy and Bounty are his Delight, and he is well pleas'd in daily heaping his Benefits upon us. In short then,

To turn away God's Anger from us, we must turn away from our Sins, and turn unto God with full purpose of Heart, and then he will soon turn in Mercy and Loving-Kindness unto us; his Anger then will pass away, and when the Fewel that feeds his Fury is remov'd, the Fire of his Wrath will soon go out; he will not be angry with us for ever, nor doom us to suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire, from which we here desire to be spar'd, and to which the People are taught to answer, and say, *Spare us good Lord, to shew their hearty Consent and Concurrence*

in these Requests, and their earnest Desire to receive the Benefit of this and the foregoing Petitions.

To draw then to a Conclusion, let us, from this Discourse, learn,

1. To pray heartily unto God, not to remember our Offences against us; and to that end, let us remember them against our selves, to judg and condemn our selves for them, and then we shall not be judg'd and condemn'd of the Lord. He will then blot them out of the Book of his Remembrance, and cancel all the Hand-writing that is against us, and will say, as he did to his peculiar People, *Their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more.*

2. Let us pray to God, not to remember the Offences of our Forefathers, so as to take vengeance of them upon us. And to that end, let us not imitate or follow their evil Deeds, or make them our own, by treading in the Steps of their Impieties; not saying with the Pharisees, if we had liv'd in the days of our Forefathers, we would not have been guilty of the Blood of the Prophets, when they themselves did the same or worse things. But let us remember them with Abhorrence, and avoid them, and then they shall never be charg'd upon us, either to shame us in this World, or condemn us in the next.

3. Let us pray God to spare us from all the Punishments that our Iniquities deserve, and from the Judgments that hang over our Heads for the same. And to that end, let us humble our selves under the Sense of our Sins, and truly repent of them; and then God will repent too of the Evil he threatens, and avert it from us.

Lastly, Let us beseech God not to be angry with us for ever, or to punish us with everlasting Destruction, which he is as willing to grant, as we can be to ask it, if we take the right Methods to prevent it. In a word, let us put up these Petitions in Sincerity and Singleness of Heart, and then we need not doubt of a gracious Answer: Which God grant, &c.

DISCOURSES ON THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE DIVINE SERVICE.

DISCOURSE III.

MAT. vi. part of the 13th Verse.

Deliver us from Evil.

*Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from
Evil.*

FROM the general Petition for Forbearance, or the sparing us from the Divine Vengeance and Indignation, I proceed to the Deprecations or Prayers against those things, that are the Causes and Occasions of them; and the first of these is in the next words of the Litany, *From all Evil and Mischief, from Sin, from the Crafts and Assautes of the Devil, from thy Wrath, and from everlasting Damnation.* To which the People all join their Assent, and say, *Good Lord deliver us.* Of this I shall treat from these words of our Blessed Saviour, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

The Words are part of the Lord's Prayer, that Divine Pattern and Platform of all true Devotion, which our Saviour gave to his Disciples, to form all their Petitions by; wherein, after other things relating to the Welfare both of our Bodies and Souls, he closes the Prayer with this Petition, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* What those Evils and Temptations are, from which we pray to be deliver'd, this and the following Paragraphs of the Litany will in some measure declare to us. In this we pray,

First, To be deliver'd from all Evil and Mischief in general.

Secondly, From Sin, the first and great Cause of them all.

Thirdly, From the Crafts and Assautes of the Devil, the strongest Temptation that leads to them.

Fourthly, From God's Wrath, which will ensue upon them here in this World. And,

Lastly, From everlasting Damnation, which will follow them in the next. These are the Particulars now to be discours'd of. And,

First,

First, We pray (as our Text and Litany direct) to be deliver'd from all Evil and Mischief in general. These two words, Evil and Mischief, are by divers Persons diversly understood, tho they all agree in the main Drift and Design of them. As,

1. Some by Evil here, understand the Evils committed against God; as Blasphemy, Profaneness, Contempt of God's Word, and the like: And by Mischief, the Evils committed against Men; as Violence, Oppression, Falshood, Injustice, and the like: all which being great Violations of the Divine Laws, that leave a great Guilt behind them, we may well enough pray to be deliver'd from them. Again,

Others, by Evil here, understand the spiritual Evils that betide the Soul; as Sorrow, Anguish, Perplexity, and Despair: and by Mischief, the corporal Evils that happen to the Body; as Sickness, Poverty, Imprisonment, and the like: which things being heavy and grievous Calamities, our Church hath taught us to pray unto God, to keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be deliver'd from all Adversities which may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts, which may assault and hurt the Soul.

But the true and genuine Sense and Understanding of these Words, is to take all Evil for the Evils of Sin, and Mischief for the Evils of Suffering and Punishment; and so they will comprise all the following Evils, from which we pray to be deliver'd.

And therefore the Litany directs us, in the next words, to say, first, *From Sin, Good Lord deliver us.* This being the first and greatest of all Evils, and indeed the Cause of all the rest; for Diseases and Death, and all kinds of Miseries enter'd into the World by the door of Sin: So the Apostle tells us, *As by one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, even so Death pass'd upon all Men, for that all have sinned;* Rom. 5. 12. Were it not for Sin, there would be no Evils in the World; and till we are deliver'd from that, we are subject to all manner of Miseries. And therefore we find David praying, *Psal. 39. 9. Deliver me, O Lord, from all mine Offences;* the Root of the Evils he either felt or fear'd: And St. Paul crying out, *Rom.*

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Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death!

Now Sin is describ'd by St. John, to be the Transgression of the Law; either by omitting what it requires, which is a Sin of Omission; or committing what it forbids, which is a Sin of Commission: both ways we offend God, and become obnoxious to the Sentence of the Law.

Moreover, Sin is divided into Original and Actual Sin:

Original Sin is that Depravation or Corruption of our Nature, which we deriv'd from our first Parents, whereby we are naturally prone to all Evil, and averse to that which is Good. This we find David confessing and bewailing; *Behold, I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceiv'd me;* Psal. 51. 5.

Actual Sins are the daily Transgressions which we actually commit against the Divine Majesty, erring and straying from his ways like lost Sheep, and breaking his Commandments in Thought, Word, and Deed. And this is done either knowingly and deliberately, against the Calls and Convictions of our own Conscience, and these are Sins of Wilfulness and Presumption; or ignorantly, by Inadvertence and Surprize; and these are Sins of Weakness and daily Incursion: from both which we here pray God to deliver us. And that,

1. By keeping us from falling into them, preventing us in all our Doings with his most gracious Favour, and furthering us with his continual Help, that all our Works may be begun, continu'd, and ended in him; we beseech him to preside over us for Good, to watch our Footsteps that they slide not, and to preserve us, by his good Providence, from doing Evil.

2. We pray God to deliver us from the Power and Dominion of Sin; that tho' we cannot totally root out the Being of it, while we abide here, yet we may so break the Force and Strength of it, that it *shall not reign in our mortal Bodies*, or cause us to fulfil the Lusts thereof. Sin hath got the mastery of some Men, who are perfect Slaves and Vassals to it, and are carry'd away captive by every Temptation. Now from this Bondage and Slavery to Sin, we here pray to be deliver'd.

3. We beg God to deliver us from the Guilt of Sin, and the Vengeance that is due to it; for every Sin binds us over to Punishment, and how secretly soever committed, makes us guilty before God. Now because God cannot acquit the Guilty,

GUILTY, or suffer the least Sin without Repentance to go unpunish'd ; we therefore fitly pray him by the assistance of his Grace to preserve us from the just Punishment of our Sins, and to deliver us from all the Evils threatened against them ; saying with *David*, *Deal not with us, O Lord, according to the multitude of our Sins, but according to the multitude of thy Mercies do away all our Offences.* To which end, we are taught to pray against all the Temptations that lead to them ; so our Text directs, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil* ; the one being necessary to the other.

And because the Devil is the great Tempter of Mankind unto Evil, our Church teaches us, in the next words, to say, *From the Crafts and Assaults of the Devil, good Lord deliver us.* Satan is the great Enemy of Mankind, who being far his Sin cast down and sunk into the black Abyss of Darknes, and the Gulph of Perdition, labours by all means to draw us after him, and to bring us into the same Condemnation ; and to that end, he is still plying us with his Temptations, to catch and circumvent us. Now the Litany here mentions two Ways or Methods, by which he seeks to deceive and play his game upon us ; the one by his *Crafts* and Subtlety, the other by his *Assaults* and more open Attacks upon us ; from both which, we here pray God to deliver us. For the first,

The Devil is a most crafty and subtle Adversary ; for which reason he is call'd the old Serpent, who by his windings and turnings endeavours to draw us into the same Revolt with himself against our Maker : by this he beguil'd our first Parents in their state of Innocence, and so may more easily betray us by it in our state of Impotence. Hence we read in Scripture of the Wiles of Satan, of the Snares of the Devil, and the Devices of that grand Deceiver, which are all cunningly laid to entrap us to our eternal Ruin. He gilds his Temptations with the Baits of Profit, Honour, and Pleasure ; and conceals the Hook that lies under them, and thereby inveigles a great part of Mankind. He extenuates the Evils of Sin, as slight and trivial Matters, not worthy of our Care and Consideration about them ; and makes too many believe the Terrors of another World to be only Bugbears to affright easy and credulous Persons.

In short, the Devil's Policy is too deep for us of our selves to discover or disappoint; and therefore we are to call in the Assistance of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to defeat and deliver us from it.

And as the Devil is a crafty, so he is a powerful Enemy; for which reason he is compar'd to a roaring Lion, that goeth to and fro the Earth, seeking whom he may devour; I Pet. 5. 8. And therefore we pray not only against the Crafts, but against the Assaults of the Devil, and to be deliver'd from the Violence of his more open Attempts upon us. The Devil, for his Power, is stiled the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that ruleth in the Children of Disobedience; Eph. 2. 1. He kept the Heathen World a long time in subjection to him, and made them serve him with many barbarous and bloody Sacrifices. And when Christ came to dissolve his Kingdom, and to turn Men from the Power of Satan unto God, he had the confidence to assault our Saviour himself with his Temptations, tho he was shamefully foil'd and baffled by him in all his Attempts, as we read in the fourth Chapter of St. Matthew. By this Victory over Satan, he hath vanquish'd his Power, broken his Forces, and rescu'd us from the Danger of his Temptations. But yet God still permits him to set upon and assault us, to try the Firmness of our Faith and Constancy to him; tho at the same time he fortifies us with Grace sufficient to withstand and overcome him, if we seek to and rely upon him for it. Sometimes he assaults us, as he did our Saviour, with the Offers of this World, and the Glories of it, if we will fall down and worship him: and this Temptation prevails with too many to forsake God, and to serve him and Mammon.

Sometimes again he assaults us with the Terrors of Persecution, to make us renounce our Christianity, and to yield up our Faith for fear of Tribulation and Sufferings; by which means many have made shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, and have deny'd Christ to avoid Persecution. In a word, the Devil watches all Advantages and Opportunities against us, and plies us with his Temptations, to compass our Destruction; which Assaults are many times too strong for our Weakness either to resist or conquer, and therefore we are to call in the Divine Power to our Aid, and to pray to God to deliver us from them. Furthermore,

Fourthly, We are here directed to pray against God's Wrath, and to say, *From thy Wrath, good Lord deliver us.* The Wrath of a King (saith Solomon) is as the roaring of a Lion, and as the Messenger of Death: but the Wrath of the King of Kings is infinitely more terrible and destructive in comparison of whom, all the Princes and Potentates of the Earth are nothing, less than nothing, and Vanity. As the Favour of God is the most desirable, so his Frowns are the most dreadful thing in the World: for if his Wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are they that escape it, by putting their Trust in him; but if his Wrath breaks out like Fire, who is able to stand before him, when he is angry? For our God is a consuming Fire, that burns up the Ungodly like Chaff, and carries all before it with a swift Destruction; and who can think of the pouring out the Vials of his Wrath without trembling? Now the Fewel that feeds the Fire of God's Wrath, is Sin, which must be remov'd, before the Fire can go out, or his Anger cease from us: for the Wrath of God is reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men. And they that persist in them, treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.

But the Wrath of God here, as 'tis distinguish'd from everlasting Damnation, relates chiefly to his present Displeasure against Sin, or the temporal Evils and Judgments it brings upon us in this Life: these are the sad Effects and Consequents of Sin, which justly stir up his Indignation, and pull down many Judgments and Calamities upon our heads: Foolish Men are plagued for their Offences, and because of their Wickedness, saith David, Psal. 107. 17. All the Miseries that betide us in this World, the Diseases of our Bodies, the Troubles of our Mind, the Disappointments in our Estate, the Disgrace and Infamy cast upon our Names, are all of them the Effects of God's Wrath and Anger against our Sins; from all which, we therefore fitly pray to be deliver'd,

But the worst and sorest of all Evils, are those that attend us in the other World, and are reserv'd for hereafter; to wit, the eternal Destruction of Soul and Body: against which we pray, in the last place, in these words; *From everlasting Damnation, Good Lord deliver us.* The Miseries of this Life, how grievous soever they may be for the

present, are yet but momentary, and shortly end in the Grave ; but the Miseries of the other World are of an eternal Duration, being endless, easeless, and remediless. They are express'd here by two dreadful words, viz. *Damnation*, and *everlasting Damnation*; both which carry nothing but Dread and Horror in the Sound of them.

As for Damnation, that is the greatest degree of Misery, that any poor Soul can be doom'd to ; for 'tis the being depriv'd of all kind of Good, and doom'd to all manner of Evil, which is the height of Misery, and the worst of all Conditions. Our Saviour hath recorded the dismal Sentence of Damnation, that will be pass'd upon all impenitent Sinners at the last and great Day of Judgment, Mar. 25. it begins with *Depart from me, ye Cursed* : by which they are banish'd from the Presence of God, the Author and Fountain of all Felicity ; and not only so, but they are sent away with a Curse, which will still dogg them at the heels, and haunt them with those Fears and Terrors of Mind, that will never suffer them to have any Rest.

The Place to which they are sentenc'd to go, is to Hell-fire, that doleful Place of Wo and Torment, where they must lie and groan under Pains, infinitely more exquisite and tender, than those which the greatest Rack or Engine of Cruelty could ever give them. They are set forth by Fire, which is the most dreadful and devouring of all Elements, that preys upon and consumes all that is cast into it ; and so is apt to create the greatest Terror and Disquiet.

The Company to which they are sentenc'd, is no better than the *Devil and his Angels*, the worst of all Company, and they for whom these Torments were prepar'd : *Tophet is prepared of old* (faith the Prophet *Isaiah*) *'tis made deep and large, the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood* ; the *Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimstone, doth kindle it* : Isa. 30. 33.

But the Sting and Bitterness of Damnation is, that 'tis everlasting, and knows no Ease or End. 'Tis some Relief in Misery, to have some hopes of an end of it, and that a time may come when the Bitterness of Death may be over, and the Voice of Joy and Health restor'd ; but to have no prospect of an End, and to groan under everlasting Torments, is the very height of Misery : and this is the case in the State of Damnation, where the *Worm that gnaws upon the Conscience never dies, and the Fire that preys upon the Vitals never goes out* ; for the Damned are consign'd to

Blackness

Blackness of Darkness for ever, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth without end. And who can bear up under endless Sufferings, or dwell with everlasting Burnings?

Thus we see the general Evils and Mischiefs we here deprecate and pray against, together with the heavy Load of God's Wrath, and the insupportable Weight of everlasting Damnation; from all which, let us all heartily join, and say, *Good Lord deliver us:* Which God grant, for the Merits of Jesus Christ, &c.



DISCOURSE IV.

St. MATTHEW vi. latt. part of 13th Verse.

Deliver us from Evil.

I Spake the last time of the first and general Deprecation, or praying against all Evil, together with the Punishments both Temporal and Eternal annex'd to it; and especially the sorest of them all, the Wrath of God, and everlasting Damnation. I come now,

Secondly, To some of those particular Sins, here mention'd in the Litany, that lead and bring Men to this fatal Destruction. Against which, we are taught to pray in the next words, saying, *From all Blindness of Heart, from Pride, Vain-glory, and Hypocrisy; from Envy, Hatred, and Malice, and all Uncharitableness, good Lord deliver us.* Of each of which something briefly. And,

I. We pray to be deliver'd from *all Blindness of Heart;* by which we are to understand all Ignorance of God and his Ways, which brings Blindness and Darkness into the Soul. And this is set here in the first place, as the Cause of all the Sins that follow; for if the Understanding, which is *the Light within* to guide the other Faculties, be *Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* And if *the Blind lead the Blind, they will both fall into the Ditch.* The Knowledg of God and his Word is *a Light unto our Feet,* and

and a Lanthorn to our Paths, and will direct us aright in the Ways of Righteousness ; but Ignorance is a blind Guide, that misleads into Error, and turns away from the Ways of Truth and Peace. Now this Ignorance or Blindness of Mind is either invincible, for want of the means of Knowledg ; which was the Case of the benighted Gentiles, who knew not God, but walk'd on still in Darknes : or, secondly, affected, for want of a due Use of the Means vouchsafed to them ; and this is the Case of Sinners now under the Gospel, who tho the Light of Divine Truths is clearly and fully reveal'd to them, yet they wilfully shut their eyes against the Light flashing in their faces, and say with those in Job, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy Ways.* Of these it is that our Saviour speaks, John 3. 19. This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.

Now this Blindness of Heart is occasion'd, partly thro the cursed Policy of Satan, who blinds the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the Gospel should shine unto them ; 2 Cor. 4. 4. He well knows, that if Mens eyes are open enough to behold the Beauty and Rewards of Holiness, they cannot but be enamour'd with it ; and if they can clearly see the Deformity and Danger of Sin, they must needs hate and abhor it, and so Satan's Kingdom of Darkness would soon be at an end : to prevent which, he disguises Virtue with an appearance of Hardships and Severities, and colours Vice with the specious Allurements of sensual Pleasures, that they may not discern the Truth of either ; and so blindly leads them in their sinful Courses to their own destruction.

2. This Blindnes of Heart is contracted, partly thro a long habitual Course or Custom of sinning, which by degrees wears off the Impressions of Vertue, and the Knowledg of Good and Evil ; it puts out the Candle of the Lord set up in every Man's Breast, to guide them aright, and so leaves Men in the Darkness of Error and Ignorance, calling Evil Good and Good Evil, against which a Woe is denounc'd, Isa. 5. 20.

3. This Blindnes of Heart proceeds, partly from the just Judgment of God, who withdraws the Light from them that will not see or work by it, and strikes them with a judicial Blindness ; that in seeing they shall see, but not perceive ; and in hearing they shall hear, but not understand ;

for

for the Heart of this People (saith God) is waxed gross, their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them; Mat. 13. 13, 14. This is the severest Judgment and saddest Condition that can befall any Person or People; from which therefore the Litany teaches us to pray, *From Blindness of Heart, good Lord deliver us.*

II. The next Sin here pray'd against, is *Pride*, a Sin hateful to God and Man; and therefore we may well pray to be deliver'd from it.

Now Pride is an over-weaning Opinion of a Man's self, whereby he arrogates too much to himself, and allows too little to others; like the proud *Pharisee*, who set himself above other Men, and despis'd the poor *Publican*. This Sin of Pride is committed sometimes against God, and sometimes against Men.

'Tis committed against God, when Men forgetting their own Weakness and Unworthiness, ascribe all that they have or do unto themselves; whereby they rob God of his Glory, and exalt themselves above their Maker. This was the Pride of *Lucifer*, *Pharaoh*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Herod*, and others; who, for lifting themselves up too high, were cast down to the nethermost Hell, and became Monuments of Divine Vengeance against all such Arrogance and Folly.

Pride towards Men consists in thinking too highly of ourselves, and too meanly of others. Solomon describes it by being *wise in our own eyes, and prudent in our own sight*; and tells us, that there is more hope of a Fool than of such Persons, for their Self-conceit renders them incapable of growing wiser or better. The proud Man magnifies his own imaginary Excellencies, and lessens others Merits to greateren his own; yea, he idolizes his InfirmitieS, and would have his very Defects to pass for Perfections; still admiring himself, and despising others. This is briefly the Nature, and these are the Effects of Pride, to assume more Honour and Power to themselves, than of right belong to them; and to give less of each to others, whose Deserts justly claim a greater share.

Now this Pride is either inward in the Heart and Mind, or outward in the whole Man. The Pride of the Heart consists

consists in ambitious and aspiring Thoughts, in the Swellings of the Mind, and entertaining too high and lofty an Opinion of our selves: and he whose Soul is thus lifted up, is not upright towards God; *Hab. 2. 4.*

And this Pride of the Heart discovers it self in the outward Pride of the whole Man; as proud Looks, high Words, haughty Gestures, a proud Gait, surly Behaviour, and the like: all which are odious and offensive both to God and Man, as betraying a proud Heart and a haughty Spirit, from which we pray here to be deliver'd; and that justly too, considering the Folly and Danger of this Sin. The Folly of Pride appears in this, because the greatest and best of us have nothing of our own to be proud of.

To be proud of our Birth, is to boast of what we contributed nothing to; and if we degenerate from the Virtues and Actions of our Ancestors, we become the Blot and Blemish of the Family.

He that is proud of Riches, is a Fool; for that is to be proud of what is none of his own, but only deposited with him for the publick Good: and if he use them otherwise, they serve only to inflame his Account, and to sink him into the deeper Condemnation.

To be lifted up for any Excellence or Ornaments of the Body, is errant Folly; for *Man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity*: his Beauty is far excell'd by the Flowers, and his Strength by the Beasts of the Field.

To be proud of our Parts, or any Perfection of the Mind, is to be proud of Ignorance and Imperfection; for the wisest Man knows nothing but very imperfectly, and is ignorant of far more things than he knows: so that to be puff'd up with Knowledg, is to be blinded with Light, or rather, to be fond of Darkness; for *he that thinketh he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know.*

To be proud of Power, is a great Weakness, and the ready way for a Man to make his Rise his Downfall.

He that is proud of his Virtue, Devotion, or Charity, confutes himself, and shews that he hath nothing of the Truth and Reality of either.

In a word, wherein soever we differ from others, if it be bad, 'tis our own, and sure we have no reason to glory in our Shame and Misery; if it be good, 'tis none of ours, but is receiv'd of God: *And if thou hast received it (saith the Apostle) why boastest thou thy self, as if thou hadst received it not?*

and

And

And as the Folly of Pride is great, so is the Danger of it much greater ; for Pride goeth before a Fall (saith the Wiseman) and a haughty Spirit before Destruction. He that exalteth himself (saith our Saviour) shall be abas'd ; for God resisteth the Proud, and bevs his Grace and Favour only to the Humble. Pride was the first and great Sin of the Devil, and that which indeed made him so ; and if we follow him herein, we fall into the Snare and Condemnation of the Devil : And if God spar'd not the Angels that sinn'd, but cast them down to Hell, let not any proud Person think he will spare him. Let none then seek to exalt himself, for God and Man will surely abase and pull him down ; but rather let us heartily pray, as we are here taught, *From the deadly Sin of Pride, Good Lord deliver us.*

III. We pray to be deliver'd from *Vain-Glory* ; this is a Branch of Pride, and evermore springs from the same Root : for he that hath too high Thoughts of himself, would have others to have the same Thoughts of him, and perhaps higher sometimes than he hath of himself. And this is the Sin of *Vain-Glory*, which consists in an immoderate Affectation of the Praise and Applause of Men. This was the Sin of *Herod*, who making an Oration to the People, and hearing it cry'd up for *the Vaine of a God, and not of a Man*, took all the Honour to himself, and gave not God the Glory, as we read, *Act. 12. 21, 22.* And this likewise was the Sin of the *Pharisees*, who sought more the Praise of Men, than the Glory of God ; for they counted Vanity and Ostentation in all that they said or did, doing all their good Works *to be seen of Men*, and fishing for Honour with the Baits of Devotion and Charity : for which reason our Saviour told them, *they had their Reward* ; the thin Breath of Mens Mouths being a sufficient Reward for such airy and superficial Righteousness : and therefore this too is a very foolish and dangerous Sin.

The Folly of it is seen in the Vanity and Uncertainty of it, for all worldly Applause depends upon the vain Breath of the Multitude, which varies with the Wind and Tide of human Affairs ; and he that seeks after it, does but *sow the Wind, and shall reap the Whirlwind*. The Peoples *Hosanna's*, and *Crucify him*, are founded almost in the same Breath ; and what they admire and applaud to-day, may be despis'd and derided to-morrow : So that to hunt after the empty Air of Applause, is to imitate the Folly of Children,

30 PRACTICAL DISCOURSES ON

men, who weary themselves in the pursuit of Feathers and Butterflies ; or like the Dog in the Fable, to catch at the shadow of Honour, and at the same time lose the Substance and Reality of it. This is so plain and obvious in Experience, that we may daily behold Instances of it with our own Eyes.

And as the Folly of Vain-Glory is great, so is the Danger of it no less ; for Mens robbing God of his Honour, and taking too much of it to themselves, provokes him to deprive them of all, and to yield them up to Scorn and Contempt. *Herod*, for affecting the Shouts and Acclamations of the People, and assuming the Glory that was due to God only, was eaten up of Worms ; and the *Pharisees*, for courting too much the Praise of Men, lost all Honour from God, and were depriv'd of any other Reward in Heaven : and therefore from Vain-Glory, *Good Lord deliver us.*

IV. Another Sin we here pray to be deliver'd from, is *Hypocrisy*, which is the Effect of Pride and Vain-Glory ; both which put Men upon disguising themselves and their Actions, to make them look fair and plausible in the eyes of Men, how hateful and abominable soever they are in the sight of God. And herein consists the Sin of Hypocrisy, which is a Semblance of Holiness and Virtue, without the Substance and Reality of them ; or the taking on a *Farm of Godliness*, and withal denying the *Power* thereof. This also was the Sin of the *Pharisees*, who are in Scripture set forth for the greatest Instances and Monuments of Hypocrisy ; for which reason our Saviour compar'd them to *whited Sepulchres*, that appear'd fair and beautiful without, but within were full of *Rottenness and Corruption*, Mat. 23. And we have too many of their Followers in our days, who make greater Pretence of Piety and Holiness than other Men, and yet have nothing under them but Falshood and Deceit, and take on a Cloke of Religion, merely to cover their evil Designs and Practices.

Now the Danger of so doing is unspeakable ; for our Saviour tells us, *They shall receive the greater Condemnation*, and the hottest Place in Hell is reserv'd for *Hypocrites and Unbelievers* : and therefore from Hypocrisy, *Good Lord deliver us.*

V. Another Sin we here pray against, is *Envie*, which is a Sicknes or Uneasines of Mind, upon the account of another's

other's Prosperity, and instead of rejoicing, repining at another's Welfare. If God hath bless'd any with better Fortune or Preferment; if one hath a better Trade, and thrives more, or if he hath gain'd a better Interest and Reputation in the World, he soon becomes the Object of Envy, and it galls and frets some to see him get above them: and this is oft-times attended, not only with wishing, but doing them all the ill Offices they can, by blasting their Credit, and undermining their Designs. This was the Sin of the fallen Angels, who having lost their first Station of Bliss and Glory, have ever since envy'd the Happiness of Mankind, and seek by all means to bring them into the same Condemnation. And this was the Sin of *Cain* against his Brother *Abel*, whose Sacrifice being better accepted than his, out of Envy slew him, because his Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous. And this Sin still reigns too much in the Breasts of many, whose Eyes are evil, because God's are good. One Man's Greatness is an eye-sore to another, who cannot bear the sight of his Advancement. Now the Sinfulness of Envy is apparent,

(1.) Because 'tis an Act of Injustice against God, by denying him the Disposal of his own Blessings, and quarrelling with the Dispensations of his Providence, as if all Benefits were thrown away that are not bestow'd upon him, and none were to be prefer'd without his leave; which made God ask the Question, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine Eye evil, because mine is good?* Mat. 21.

(2.) Envy is a great Piece of Injustice against our Neighbour, for it grudges him the Blessings that God hath given him, and would fain rob him of that, to which he hath an undoubted Title: such was *Ahab's* Envy against *Naborh*, in the matter of his Vineyard; and such was *Joseph's* Brethrens Envy against him.

(3.) Envy is hurtful to a Man's self, and is very fatal to the Breast that harbours it; for it pines and preys upon the Spirits, macerates the Body, and brings Rotteness into the Bones; and being thus offensive to God and Man, we may well say, *From Envy, Good Lord deliver us.*

VI. Another Sin here mention'd to be pray'd against, is *Hatred*; and this proceeds oft-times from Envy, which begets the greatest and worst kind of Hatred. Now Hatred is the Excel of Anger, when it lasts too long, and rises

to too high Degrees. Anger of it self is an innocent Passion, and sometimes useful and necessary too, when 'tis set upon the right Object, and keeps within the due Bounds of Time and Measure: and therefore we are bid to be angry, and sin not; which implies, that we may be angry without Sin: but when 'tis misplac'd, when it continues too long, and exceeds its due Measures, it then turns into Hatred, which is always a dangerous and deadly Sin, that is attended with Rancour and an evil Mind. And this Sin renders us of all others the most unlike unto God, for God is Love, and he that walketh in Love, walketh in God; but Hatred is the Passion of the Devil, and he that liveth in Hatred, walketh in the Steps of the Evil One, which lead to the Chambers of Death and Destruction.

VII. Near akin to this is the next Sin, from which we pray for Deliverance, and that is Malice, which is the highest Degree of Hatred, and is attended with Desires and Designs of doing Mischief. The malicious Man delighteth in Evil, and studies to wreak his Spleen and Spite upon others, meditating Revenge, and pleasing himself in all Acts of Cruelty. Solomon describes them, Prov. 4. 16. They sleep not, except they have done Mischief; and their Sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

This is directly opposite to the Humanity and Kindness of Christians, which consists in doing all the good Offices they can to one another; whereas malicious Spirits study to do all the Evil and Mischief they are able: which is the Temper of Satan, and the Disposition of the damned Spirits in Hell, who seek to draw others into Misery and Torment, and will certainly draw those into it who imitate and follow them herein. And therefore from the black Passions of Hatred and Malice, *Good Lord deliver us.*

Lastly, We are directed, in the close, to pray against all Uncharitableness, both in Thought, Word, and Deed: for there is first an Uncharitableness of the Heart, which consists in thinking and wishing Evil; there is an Uncharitableness of the Tongue, in speaking and spreading Evil, by passing hard Censures and Judgment upon others without any Authority; and there is an Uncharitableness of the Hand, in doing Evil, and withholding Good from those that are in Necessity and Want: all which are directly contrary to all the Branches and Properties of Charity, mention'd

tion'd by the Apostle, which restrain us from thinking and wishing, as well as from speaking and doing Evil. And because all these things will meet with a heavy Doom and Sentence at the last Day, let us, as we are here directed, say, and that heartily, *From all Uncharitableness, good Lord deliver us.*: Which God grant, for the Merits of Jesus Christ, &c.



DISCOURSE V.

St. MATTHEW vi. 13. latter part.

But deliver us from Evil.

HAVING spoken of the Evil of Sin in general, and likewise of some particular Sins, from which we pray to be deliver'd; I proceed, as the next Paragraph of the Litany leads me, to another Sin equally heinous and dangerous, with the Temptations leading thereto, against which we pray in these words: *From Fornication and all other deadly Sin, and from all the Deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, good Lord deliver us.* Where I must consider,

First, The Nature of the Sin pray'd against; and that is *Fornication.*

Secondly, I must shew it to be a *deadly Sin*, against those who make too light of it. And,

Thirdly, I must consider the Temptations leading to that and other deadly Sins, from the *Deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*; from which we also pray to be deliver'd. And,

First, For the Nature of *Fornication*; which is sometimes taken more strictly, for the Incontinence of single and unmarry'd Persons, whereby they violate the Rules of Chastity, and instead of keeping their *Vessels in Sanctification and Honour*, as the Apostle requires, defile themselves with impure and sinful Embraces; doing those Acts without Wedlock, which are utterly forbidden and made unlawful to them. And in this sense 'tis distinguish'd from Adultery,

which is the Incontinence of marry'd Persons, whereby they violate the Bonds of Wedlock, and break all those solemn Vows and Promises which they made at the entrance upon that State. But Fornication is sometimes taken in a larger sense, so as to include all Acts of Unchastity, and all filthy Lusts in or without Marriage, and all manner of Uncleanness committed in both States ; and in this sense I take it to be here understood. From whence I proceed to shew,

Secondly, That Fornication is, as it is here stil'd, a deadly Sin ; and that in both its Branches, as taken for the Incontinence of single or marry'd Persons, and all other Acts of Uncleanness, which are all threatned in Scripture with Exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven.

I know some there are, and they too many, who take simple Fornication, as they call it, that is, the Incontinence of single Persons, for a slight and trivial matter, scarce worth the regarding or repenting of. The Sensualist stiles it but a Trick of Youth, or a pardonable Frolick of Flesh and Blood.

The Church of *Rome* reckons it not a mortal, but a venial Sin ; for in their account of deadly Sins, Fornication is always omitted, making light of it, as a thing that will easily obtain Pardon. Yea, some too much addicted to this Vice will quote Scripture for it, and seek to defend it out of the Book of God : as from *Hosea* 1. 2. *Go, take to thee a Wife of Whoredoms, and Children of Whoredoms.* And Chap. 3. 1. *Go yet, love a Woman beloved of her Friend, yet an Adulteress.* From whence they gather, that Whoredom, or Fornication, is not only allow'd, but sometimes requir'd and recommended. Again, the Apostle (say they) reckons it up among things indifferent ; as things offer'd to *Idols, Fornication, Things strangled, and Blood*; from which they were to abstain awhile, to avoid giving offence, *Acts* 15. 20. And therefore Fornication is no such great matter as some would make it.

But notwithstanding all this and much more, which the Patrons of this Vice alledg for the defence or excuse of it, our Church truly stiles Fornication a deadly Sin ; for that which excludes Men from the Kingdom of Heaven, and dooms them to the Damnation of Hell, may be justly accounted a deadly Sin : and that Fornication doth so, the Apostle expressly tells us in *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.* where *Fornica-*

tors,

tors, Adulterers, Effeminate, and Abusers of themselves by fleshly Lusts, are put in the front of those that shall never inherit the Kingdom of God. And will any think that a light matter, which is attended with so sore and heavy a Punishment? Is not that which deprives Men of their natural, spiritual, and eternal Life, and brings them to everlasting Destruction, truly reckon'd a deadly Sin? Certainly they who call Whoredom and Fornication but a Trick of Youth, do but put a Trick upon themselves; and all such Frolicks, as they stile them, will be found to have a fatal and miserable End: for Solomon declares a Whore to be a deep Ditch, that swallows up both Body and Soul in the Pit of Destruction; her Ways lead to the Grave, and her Paths to the Chambers of Death. St. Paul tells us, that he that *commits Fornication sinneth against his own Body, he defiles the Temple of the Holy Ghost*, and makes the Members of Christ to become the Members of an Harlot; 1 Cor. 6. 15, &c. Which things carry a great Guilt with them, and will in the end meet with a suitable Punishment.

As for the Church of Rome's distinguishing between mortal and venial Sins, and reckoning Fornication in the number of the latter; our Church utterly disclaims any such Distinction, and declares all Sins to be in their own nature mortal, and none to be venial, but by the Mercy and Merits of Christ: it owns Death to be the Wages of all Sin, and no where exempts Fornication from that sad and heavy Doom, but rather ranks Fornicators with the greatest of Sinners, and shews all filthy Lusts to lead to the Destruction both of Soul and Body.

And as for the Prophet's bidding the Jews to take to themselves Wives of Whoredom, and Women that were Adulteresses, 'tis only an ironical Expression, to signify the Danger and Destruction that will attend such Courses; 'tis like that Saying of Solomon, *Rejoice, O Young-man, in thy Youth, and let thine Heart cheer thee in the days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thine Heart, and in the sight of thine Eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to Judgment*: Eccles. 11. 9. And the Author to the Hebrews hath told us the same in this case, saying, *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judg*, Chap. 13. 4. Sometimes God executes his Judgments on such Sinners here in this Life, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, raining down Fire and Brimstone upon them from Heaven, for burning in their Lusts one towards another. So he did

with Zimri and Cogbi, who were run thro with a Javelin in the very Act of Uncleanness. And of the great numbers that committed Fornication in the Wilderness, we read, that there fell three and twenty thousand of them in one day, 1 Cor. 10. 8. But if any go unpunish'd for this Sin in this World, they will surely rue for it in the next; where Sentence will pass upon them, to suffer for ever the Vengeance of eternal Fire. And therefore we may well pray, as we are here taught, *From Fornication, good Lord deliver us:* and as it follows in the next words, from all other deadly Sins. Against this Expression some have vainly objected, that it favours too much of the Popish Distinction of mortal and venial Sins; implying, that some Sins are deadly, and others not; that the former for their Heinousness may and ought to be pray'd against, but the latter for their Smallness need neither Prayers nor Pardon.

But this Suggestion is utterly false and groundless against our Church, which plainly declares all Sins to be mortal, being all Transgressions of the Divine Laws, and justly incurring the Penalty of Death due to them; and that no Sin is venial or pardonable, without Repentance. But yet there are Degrees of Guilt, and greater Aggravations in some Sins, than in others. As Sins of Presumption are more heinous than Sins of Ignorance and Inadvertence; and Sins of Wilfulness are greater than Sins of Weakness and daily Incursion; and as there are greater Degrees of Guilt, so there are greater Degrees of Punishment due to some Sins than to others, and require deeper Sorrow and Repentance to do them away.

Now what those more heinous and deadly Sins are, we may better learn by the Catalogues given of them by St. Paul in the first Chapter to the Romans, the sixth Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the fifth Chapter to the Galatians, than by the Catalogue of the seven deadly Sins given by the Church of Rome; where Fornication being left out of the number, our Church hath put it in the first place, and teaches to pray to be deliver'd from Fornication, and all other deadly Sins.

And the better to be preserv'd from all the Snares and Temptations leading to these more heinous and deadly Sins, we are taught in the next words to pray, *From all the Deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, good Lord deliver us.* These are the three great Enemies of Mankind,

Mankind, that lie in wait to deceive, and to deprive them of their Happiness ; they watch for their Souls, not to save, but to destroy them ; and that by all the ways and methods of Deceit. And because their Power, Malice, and Subtlety are too great for us to encounter by our own Strength, we beseech God to *deliver us from all their Deceits.* To which end, 'twill be expedient to speak something of each of them, the better to discover their Devices, and defeat their Designs upon us.

And, *1st,* We pray to be deliver'd *from all the Deceits of the World.* Where by *World* we understand not the excellent Frame and Fabrick of the World, consisting of the two great Parts of it, Heaven and Earth : for that is so far from being deceitful, in drawing our Minds from God, that it directs our Contemplation to Him, causing us to admire the infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of that God, who made and preserves all things in such excellent Beauty and Order. But by the *World* here we understand the evil Men, the wicked Customs, the vile Practices, and the bad Examples of the World, which seduce Men into all manner of Wickedness, call'd therefore *the wicked World,* John 7. 7. which, as *Solomon* tells us, *worketh many a deceitful Work,* Prov. 11. 18. by betraying Men into Sin, and thereby leading them on to their own Destruction.

Indeed, the World in this sense is a grand Impostor, that puts many vile Cheats upon us, and deceives many to their utter ruin. It promises much, and performs little ; and when it hath rais'd our Expectations of receiving much Good, it frustrates all our Hopes, and brings upon us the greatest Evils. It flatters Men with the Hopes of Ease and Happiness in the good things of this Life, which in the Enjoyment prove no better than *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* And therefore we find many Cautions against loving the World, and putting our trust in any thing in it ; which is but trusting to a broken Reed, that will surely fall and deceive us.

The truth is, the World hath many Baits to allure us into Sin, and many Terrors to affright us from our Duty ; and by both seeks to betray and circumvent us. The Baits and Allurements of the World, are those that are stil'd the Pomps and Vanities of the World ; such as Riches and Honours, with all the Gaiety and Bravery that attend them, as fine Houses, costly Attire, great Retinue, Feasting, Jollity, and the like ; in all which, it shews a fair Outside

and a gaudy Appearance, but conceals the Cares, Crosses, and Troubles that lie within : it presents the Bait, but hides the Hook that is under it ; whereby many, like the silly Fish, are caught to their destruction.

In short, the World gilds over all its Vanities with specious Colours, that they may the better take with unwary Men ; and conveys its Poison in sugar'd Pills, that they may the better go down ; and by both deceives and destroys the greatest part of Mankind.

And as the World hath Tricks and Allurements to draw Men into Sin, so hath it Terrors and Affrightments to drive them from their Duty. Sometimes the World changes the Scene, and shews the meagre Face of Poverty and Distress, of Bonds and Imprisonment, to scare those with its Frowns and Terrors, that will not be allur'd by Smiles and Encouragements : sometimes it threatens and brings on sad Storms of Persecutions, to make Men revolt from the Faith, and renounce their Profession ; by which means many have prov'd Deserters of Christ, and Renegadoes from their Religion. These are some of the principal Deceits of the World, whereby it inveigles Mankind, and carries captive the unthinking Multitude : And from these and all other Deceits of the World, we here say, *Good Lord deliver us.*

2dly, We pray against *all the Deceits of the Flesh*: where by the *Flesh* we understand that carnal Part of us, which is distinguish'd from the Soul, the spiritual Part of our Being. By the Deceits of the Flesh are meant the sensual Lusts, Appetites, and Desires of that fleshly Part, which oft-times overbear our Reason and Religion, and hurry us on to the satisfying and gratifying of them. Now these Works of the Flesh are reckon'd up by the Apostle, *Gal. 5. 19, 20.* viz. *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Drunkenness, Revelings,* and the like ; of which he often declares, that *they who do these things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* These are here stil'd, *The Deceits of the Flesh*, because they deceive the Expectations of all that practise them. They promise Pleasure, but are attended with Pain ; they please the Body, but destroy the Soul. And therefore St. Peter wills us to *abstain from fleshly Lusts, because they war against the Soul,* *1 Pet. 2. 11.* They war against the animal Soul, by shortning of Life ; and they war against the rational and immortal Soul, by robbing it of its Peace and Tranquillity, and

and filling it with nothing but Horror and Disquiet. For which reason, the Apostle truly stiles them *deceitful Lusts*, *Eph. 4. 22.* because they deceive all that indulge themselves in them; when they seem to please most, they have a sting in the tail, and go off with Loathing and bitter Farewells.

In short, the Flesh is an Enemy within, in our own Bosom, which is far more dangerous than one without; for it oft-times betrays us into the hands of those that wish us ill, and joins issue with our greatest Adversaries: and therefore, *From all the Deceits of the Flesh, good Lord deliver us.*

3dly, We pray against all the Deceits of the Devil, who is not only stil'd a *Tempter*, but a *Deceiver* of Mankind, *Rev. 20. 10.* He beguil'd our first Parents in Paradise by his Lyes and Impostures, for which he is said to be a *Lyar from the beginning, and the Father of them*; and hath deceiv'd their Posterity ever since. He tempted our Saviour with all the Arts of Subtlety and Insinuation, to draw him in to worship him, and to betray him into Idolatry and a Distrust of God; tho he met with his Overmatch in him, who shamefully foil'd him in all his Attempts: but he hath since had more success upon his Followers, by prevailing upon their Weakness, and seducing them into Error and Wickedness. Satan is indeed the grand Sollicitor to all manner of Evil, 'tis his whole busines to cheat and deceive, and he hath many Stratagems and Devices to that purpose. Hence we read of the Wiles of Satan, the Snares of the Devil, and the fiery Darts of the Wicked One, with which he wounds many. He makes use of the World and the Flesh to lay their baits and traps for us, and then improves their Temptations to the greatest advantage against us. Sometimes he tempts us to Presumption of God's Mercy, without performing the Conditions of it; at other times he tempts us to despair, even in the most diligent Use of all good Means. In Prosperity he tempts to Pride and Wantonness, in Adversity to Murmuring and Impatience. He persuades loose and dissolute Persons to believe all Religion to be but Priestcraft, or a Trick of State to keep People in awe; that the History of Christ is but a Fable, and the Mysteries of the Gospel both incredible and impossible. In Youth he makes them believe that 'tis too soon to repent, till they have fill'd up the Measure of their Sins; in Old Age, that 'tis too late, and that they are past bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance. These are some of the Deceits of the Devil, by which he draws

many into endless Perdition. And therefore from these and all other Deceits and Devites of the Devil, Good Lord deliver us.

Thus we see the Sense and Reason of this Paragraph in the Litany: from whence we may learn,

1. To flee Fornication, and all other sinful Lusts of the Flesh; for every Sin that a Man doth (saith the Apostle) is without the Body; but he that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own Body: 1 Cor. 6. 18. yea, and as Solomon tells us, wrongeth his own Soul too, by depriving it of all Peace and Comfort here, and of all Hopes of Health and Happiness hereafter; Prov. 8. 36. Let us therefore abhor this detestable and damnable Sin, and keep our selves pure from all Uncleanness: Go not after a strange Woman, saith Solomon, for he that goeth after her, goeth as an Ox to the Slaughter, and as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks, till a Dart strike through his Liver, as a Bird hastening to the Snare, not knowing that it is for his Life; Prov. 7. 22, 23.

2. Let us watch as well as pray, against all Temptations to this and other deadly Sins; let us strive against them by Abstinence and Mortification, without which, all striving against them in Prayer will be of no avail: but especially let us watch against all the Deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Let the World find somebody else to delude with its empty Shows and Vanities, and let not us be befool'd by them any longer. Let us not hearken to the flattering Suggestions and Sollicitations of the Flesh, nor be mock'd any more by its false and deceitful Pleasures. Do not enter into a Parley with the Devil, nor lend an ear to the Suggestions of the Tempter, for when he speaks fairest, and promises most, he is most intent to deceive, and to compass thy Destruction: but resist the Devil, and he will flee from you; keep your ground, and you may be sure to win the Field, for his Power is broken, and he cannot hurt you without your own consenting and yielding to him.

In a word, put on the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to withstand the Evil One; and when you have done all, to stand: so shall you be more than Conquerors thro Christ that loveth you: Which God grant, &c.

DISCOURSE VI.

St. MATTHEW vi. part of the 13th Verse.*Deliver us from Evil.*

FROM the Evil of Sin, and the Temptations leading thereunto, the Litany, in the next place, leads to the Evils of Suffering and Punishment; from which it likewise prays to be deliver'd in these words that follow: *From Lightning, and Tempest, from Plague, Pestilence, and Famine, from Battel and Murder, and from sudden Death, Good Lord deliver us.* These are some of the great Evils of Punishment, that betide both Body and Soul, and therefore must be particularly spoken to.

But before I begin, it may be worth while to observe the Order and Method here prescrib'd by the Church, which is to pray, first against Sin, and then against Punishment; because Sin is the greatest of all Evils, and the Cause of all the other Evils that betide us. And because the removing of the Cause is the best way to be rid of the bad Effects that proceed from it, we therefore beseech God, first to free us from the Power and Guilt of Sin, that we may the better prevent or remove the Punishments and Judgments that are occasion'd by it: Some of which we have here a brief Account of; as,

I. We pray to be deliver'd *from Lightning and Thunder*, which commonly go together. And here we may note, that there are some Punishments that come more immediately from the hand of God, and these are properly call'd Judgments, because they proceed in a more especial manner from the just Judg of all the World; and there are others that are inflicted by the hands of Men, which tho' executed by those that are authoriz'd by God to punish Evil-Doers, yet are not said to be so directly and immediately from him. Of the first sort are the Judgments we here deprecate, viz. Lightning and Thunder, which being both in the Air above us, 'tis not in our power either to darken the one, or to silence the other; it is the Lord that sendeth

sendeth forth the Lightning, 'tis the glorious God that commandeth the Thunder: and since we can neither command or remove either of our selves, we address to God to preserve us from them. But here again we must note, that we pray not absolutely against Lightning and Thunder, for these are reckon'd among the Works of God: *He made a Decree for the Rain (saith Job) and a way for the Lightning and Thunder;* Job 28. 16. And these are sometimes call'd upon to praise God, and to fulfil his Word.

But 'tis the bad Effects of Lightning and Thunder, that we here deprecate; for these have sometimes a very malign Influence, both upon the Minds and Bodies of Men: for the Minds of Men, they sometimes fill them with great Fears and Terrors, taking Lightning for a Fire from Heaven, and Thunder for the Voice of God. Hence we find the People, when they heard *a Voice of Heaven*, said, that it *thunder'd*; John 12. 28, 29. We read of *Caligula*, a *Roman Emperor*, that he was so startled at the Noise of Thunder, that he was wont to creep under a Bed, to hide himself from the Sound of it, as thinking it the Voice of God, threatening some impendent Evil. And still most People are afraid of Lightning, and tremble at Thunder; and who (faith one) can hear those celestial Cannons Flash and roar, without Horror and Amazement?

Sometimes again they have a pernicious Influence upon the Bodies of Men and Beasts, and are sent sometimes as Scourges to punish Mens Iniquities. Hence the Psalmist tells us, of God's *thundering out of Heaven* against the Enemies of his Church, Psal. 18. 13, 14. *The Highest gave his Thunder, Hailstones, and Coals of Fire; he sent out his Arrows, and scatter'd them, and cast forth Lightnings, and consum'd them.* We read of whole Armies discomfited by Lightning, and scatter'd by the terrible Sound of Thunder; and we have known some scorch'd by the piercing Flashes of Lightning, and others knock'd down by hot Thunderbolts: And therefore we may well pray to be deliver'd from both, which is the best Expedient for the preventing and removing of them; as we may see, Exod. 9. 28, 29, where *Pharaoh* being, among other Judgments, chas'tis'd with *Thundering and Hail*, for not obeying the Voice of the Lord, in letting his People go, was so far humbled by them, as to entreat *Moses* and *Aaron* to pray for him, that there might be no more mighty Thunderings and Hail, and he would let the People go: which they accordingly did, and

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the Thunderings and Hail soon ceas'd. The same did *Samuel* in the behalf of the *Israelites*, who, for their Wickedness, were punish'd with *Thunderings and Rain*, in the midst of Harvest, till *Samuel* by his Prayers remov'd the Judgment from them; as we read, *1 Sam. 12. 17.* which is a good Direction and Encouragement to take the same Course. And this will lead me to the next thing here pray'd against, and that is,

II. From Tempest; *From Lightning and Tempest, good Lord deliver us.* These commonly attend or accompany one another; for Thunder and Lightning raise those furious Storms and Tempests, that are dreadful in the Sound, and dismal in the Effects of them; for they bring great Destruction, and heart-breaking Losses both by Sea and Land. By Sea they occasion great Shipwrecks, and sink the Lives and Fortunes of many; by Land they blow down goodly Houses, root up lofty Trees, and take away the Lives of Men and Beasts: of all which doleful Disasters and Calamities, we of this Island have had a late and woful Experience, which should teach us all to pray, from Storms and Tempests, *Good Lord deliver us.* Let us cry with the Disciples in the Storm, *Lord save us, or else we perish;* and then He who commands both Sea and Land, and makes the Winds and the Storms obey him, will deliver us from the Fury of raging Winds, from the Danger of impetuous Tempests, and from the Inundations of mighty Waters: which should lead us all to him upon all such Occasions.

III. The next Evil we pray to be deliver'd from, is the *Plague and the Pestilence;* which being near a-kin, must be handled together. They differ only, as the Disease doth from the Infection that follows it; the Plague being the Distemper, and the Pestilence the Contagion that issues from it: And this includes under it all other pestilential and infectious Distempers, especially when they become fatal and epidemical. This is one of the sorest Judgments that can betide a People, or the smartest Rod with which God is pleas'd to correct a sinful Nation; as plainly appears, by the general Destruction it makes wherever it comes: for it sweeps away many Thousands together, and turns populous Cities into a desolate Wilderness; it corrupts the Air we breathe in, and poisons the whole Mass of Blood, and so leaves the infected Person without all hopes of Remedy or Recovery.

But

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But besides its being thus dangerous and deadly, 'tis also a most uncomfortable Distemper; for it drives away all our Friends and Relations from us, when we have the greatest need of their Help: *They of mine Acquaintance (saith David) were afraid of me, and they that saw me without, convey'd themselves from me.* The Plague shuts up Men from the Society of all that might comfort and assist them; it puts their Kinsfolks and Neighbours far from them, and hides their Acquaintance out of their sight: Parents then forsake their Children, and Children their Parents; Husbands their Wives, and Wives their Husbands; and Men are then abhor'd and abandon'd of their nearest and dearest Friends: and therefore 'tis call'd, *the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, and the Sickness that destroys at Noon-day*; Psal. 91. And in the same Psalm 'tis call'd, *the noisom Pestilence*, that chases away all Succour and Relief from us; which renders it of all Diseases the most fatal, and the most uncomfortable.

But above all, the Suddenes of the Stroke increases the Sadness of the Distemper, and makes it of all others the most terrible; for it sends Men packing into the other World, before they have made their Accounts ready in this, and fills them with those Distractions, that make them uncapable of doing it. It gives no warning of its coming, nor any shelter of security from it; but seizes all alike, from the highest to the lowest, and sends many unprepard Souls to eternal Misery and Torment: which should make us cry mightily, and say, *From Plague and Pestilence, Good Lord deliver us.* And this we should the rather do, because Prayer is the only way to prevent or remove it: for the Plague or Pestilence is a Judgment (as we before observ'd) inflicted immediately by the hand of God, and therefore to Him our recourse must be for the averting and removing of it. And this we find hath ever been the most effectual Course to be deliver'd from it: *Aaron offer'd Incense unto God, and made Atonement for the People, and so the Plague was stay'd*, Numb. 16. 47, 48. *Phineas pray'd, and executed Judgment, and so the Plague ceas'd*; Psal. 106. 30. Which Examples direct us to the same Course, to be freed from the same Calamity; and so our Church here does, by saying, *From Plague and Pestilence, Good Lord deliver us.*

IV. The
Book of Revelations

IV. The next Evil we pray to be deliver'd from, is *Famine*; *From Plague, Pestilence, and Famine, Good Lord deli-*
ver us. This is another Judgment, that comes immediately from the hand of God; for none but God can stop the Influences of the Heavens, or withhold the Fruits of the Earth; 'tis He that commandeth the Rain, and makes Scarcity or Plenty, as he sees fit: *A fruitful Land maketh her barren* (saith the Psalmist) *for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein;* Psal. 107. 34. When Mens Ways please the Lord, he opens the Windows of Heaven, and showers down his Blessings upon them; he makes the Clouds to drop Fatness, and blesses their Victuals with Increase: But when they provoke him by their Transgressions, he shuts up the Doors of the Clouds, and keeps the Rain from descending, and the Dew from distilling upon them, and thereby cuts off the Provision of Bread: He makes the *Heavens as Iron, and the Earth as Brass,* that is, incapable of receiving any Seed, or yielding any Increase; as he threatens, Lev. 26. 19, 20, &c. by which means he *breaks the Staff of Bread,* and brings a *Dearth upon the Land;* all we read at large in that Chapter.

Now Famine is either general, when it reaches whole Countries; or particular, when it happens only to some particular Places, as besieg'd Towns and Cities: the Miseries of both are unspeakable and unsufferable; for whether Provisions are cut off by Heaven, or intercepted by Armies, in both cases the Sustenance and Support of Life is withheld, and great Numbers must pine away and perish for lack of Food. In Sieges many have been reduc'd to those Extremities, as to eat their own Flesh, to devour their own Children, to eat Cats and Dogs, Rats and Mice, and any the worst sort of things; and when these have fail'd, to starve and die with Hunger at last, than which no Death can be more miserable and tormenting: 'tis not only a painful, but a long and lingring way of dying, wherein Nature, as one hath observ'd, is made both a Tortmentor and Executioner to it self; and 'tis much easier to be dispatch'd quickly by the Sword, than to starve by inches, and perish by degrees with Hunger.

This then being one of the most dreadful and terrible of all God's Judgments, which lays waste whole Countries, and turns Places, fruitful as the Garden of *Eden,* into desolate Wildernesses; let us all heartily pray to God, and say,

say, From Famine and Dearth, Good Lord deliver us : To which we are encourag'd by God's gracious Promise, Call upon me in the time of Trouble, and I will hear you. Many Instances whereof we have in this very Case in holy Scripture : *Elisha pray'd to God, in the great Famine of Samaria, and prevail'd for the removing the Judgment from them, and thereby turn'd a grievous Scarcity into a very great Plenty ; as we read in the 2d of Kings, 6th and 7th Chapters.* *Elias by his Prayers open'd and shut the Windows of Heaven ; for he pray'd earnestly that it might not rain, and it rain'd not upon the Earth for the space of three Years and six Months ; and again he pray'd for Rain, and the Heavens gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruits :* thence inferring, that the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much, for the averting of this and all other Judgments, James 5. 16, 17, 18. which is abundant Encouragement to do the same, upon fearing or feeling the like Calamity.

V. Another Evil we here deprecate or pray against, is *Battel and Murder* ; which being inseparable Attendants on each other, may be properly put and handled together : so our Church here does, in saying, *From Battel and Murder, Good Lord deliver us.*

The three great Judgments, with which God is wont to punish incorrigible Offenders, are *the Plague, the Famine, and the Sword* : The First including all pestilential and infectious Diseases : The Second, all the Miseries of Penury or Want of necessary Sustenance, of both which something hath been spoken : The Third, viz. the Sword, includes all the Calamities of War, as Battels and Murder, with all the Disasters that proceed from them ; of which also something must be said. And here the Miseries of War are so many and great, that when *David* fell under the Displeasure of God for numbering the People, and when God gave him the Choice of the forenam'd Punishments, he chose rather a raging Pestilence, than to fall under the Fury of the Sword ; saying, *Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his Mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of Man* ; 2 Sam. 24. 14. Indeed the Sword, in the hands of cruel and blood-thirsty Men, is the severest Scourge wherewith God is wont to lash a rebellious People ; for it drains the Blood and Treasure of a Kingdom, and reduces the most flourishing Nations to Poverty and Desolation.

the Deprecations in the Litany.

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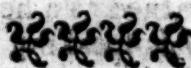
flation. Fields dyed in Blood, and cover'd with the Corpse cases of the Slain, the Cries of Widows and Orphans for rest of their nearest and dearest Relations, the Plunder and Profanation of Things Sacred, are the direful Effects of Battels and Fighting. What havock War makes of the Lives and Fortunes of Men, and what heavy Burdens it lays upon the Backs of Subjects, our own sad Experience may abundantly testify; how it decays Trade, discourages Husbandry, and destroys all the Comforts of Life, hath been too much felt, to need any other Proof. But above all, what sad havock it makes of Religion and common Honesty, by introducing Atheism, Deism, and all manner of Sects and Divisions in Church and State: how it sets aside Laws, and tramples upon Right and Justice, every discerning Eye may behold: which made the Poets of old affirm the Original of War to be from Hell, and the Fomenter of them to be the Devil. St. James ascribes Wars and Fightings to Mens Lusts that war in their Members, and to the diabolical Passions of Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Revenge; but whencesoever it came, it is always attended with Murder and Destruction, and leads to the Chambers of Death and Hell: and therefore, *From Barr and Murther, good Lord deliver us.*

VI. The last Evil we here deprecate or pray against, is sudden Death; *From sudden Death good Lord deliver us.* This Petition is found in most of the Liturgies of the Eastern and Western Churches, and hath been put up by good Men in all Ages, tho some in our Age have weakly excepted against it, as entrenching upon God's Decrees, who having assign'd to every one the time of their Death, we may not ask him to alter it; and because we ought always to be prepar'd for Death, we may not prescribe to him the Time or Manner of it. But did these Men consider the great danger of being surpriz'd by Death before they are ready, and that the best of Men are not so well prepar'd as they ought; they would soon see the Piety and Necessity of this Petition: especially considering that sudden Death, as it comprises all untimely and violent Deaths, is a sore Evil, and is threatned as a heavy Punishment. Eli-phaz in the Book of Job speaking of the Wicked, saith, *His Days shall be accomplish'd and cut off before his time, and his Branch shall not be green; he shall shake off his unripe Grape, and shall cast off his Flower as the Olive;* meaning that

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that he shall be taken away by a sudden and untimely Death; Job 15. 32, 33. David declares of the wicked and deceitful Person, that he shall not live out half his days; that is, before those Years are spent, which God and Nature allow'd him; Psal. 55. 23. And Solomon tells us the same, Prov. 2. 22. And as sudden Death is threatened to bad Men, so hath it been much fear'd and dreaded by good Men. Hezekiah speaks of it as one of his greatest Fears; Isa. 38. 10, 11. I said, in the cutting off my days (saith he) I shall go to the Gates of the Grave, I am depriv'd of the residue of my Years; I said, I shall not see the Lord in the Land of the Living, nor behold any more the Inhabitants of the Earth, &c. where he expresses his great Fears of having his Life cut off by a sudden and untimely Death. Holy David so fear'd, as to pray against it, saying, O spare me a little, that I may recover my Strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen; Psal. 39. 13. that is, take me not away suddenly, but give me time to consider and prepare for my last End.

Indeed, none of us are as well prepar'd as we should, and the best may be prepar'd better; and therefore we may all desire the Respite of a little Time for that purpose, not to be too hastily hurry'd out of the World, or to enter unadvisedly upon a boundless Eternity; but to have short warning at least to think of it, a sudden Death being often found an unprepar'd Death. And therefore our Church here teaches to pray against it, because it gives no time to settle either temporal or spiritual Matters, and leaves many times very uncomfortable Thoughts and Apprehensions behind it in surviving Friends. Let us therefore take the Caution of Elihu in Job; Because there is Weak, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, for then a great Ransom cannot deliver thee; Job 36. 18. And because there are many things that may bring this hasty Stroke upon us, let us pray with our Church, From Lightning and Tempest, from Plague, Pestilence, and Famine, from Basset and Murder, and from sudden Death, good Lord deliver us.



D I S-

DISCOURSE VII.

St. MATTHEW vi. 13. latter part.

Deliver us from Evil.

AS all Men may be consider'd in a double Capacity ; to wit, in a private Capacity as Men, and a publick Capacity as Subjects to be rul'd by Laws and Government : so there are some particular Sins and Punishments, that appertain to them in each of those Capacities. Of those that concern Men in their private and personal Capacity, I have already spoken in the foregoing part of the Litany, and shew'd what great reason we have to pray to God to be deliver'd from them.

I come now to those Evils of Sin and Punishment, that concern Men in their more publick Capacity as Subjects, to be govern'd by Laws and good Orders in Church and State ; and from these we pray to be deliver'd in the next Paragraph, in these words : *From all Sedition, privy Conspiracy, and Rebellion ; from all False Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism ; from Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word and Commandment.* Where mention is made of some Sins that relate to us as Members of the State, as *Sedition, Privy Conspiracy, and Rebellion* : Some as we are Members of the Church ; as *False Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism* : And some as we are Members of both ; as *Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of God's Word and Commandment*. From all which we say, *Good Lord deliver us.*

Now because all these have a pernicious influence both upon the publick and private Welfare, I shall speak something particularly to them, that by seeing the Evil and Danger of those great Enormities, we may the more heartily pray against them. And,

I. We pray to be deliver'd from *Sedition*, with all the Evils and Miseries that flow from it. Now *Sedition* is the sowing the Seeds of Discord and Dissension in the Minds of the People, or the seeking to alienate the Hearts and Affections of Subjects from the Duty and Allegiance they

owe to their Prince; which is the first Essay of changing or shaking off the Yoke of Government. And this is commonly done, partly by seditious Words, and partly by seditious Writings.

For the first, the Tongue is by St. James call'd a Fire, a World of Iniquity, that sets on fire the whole Course of Nature, and is it self set on fire of Hell; Jam. 3. 6. And this is never more truly verify'd, than when it vents hard Speeches, and spreads evil Reports of Governours; which are apt to inflame the Minds of the People, and to put all things into a Combustion. The complaining of Grievances and Male-Administration, the blaming the Counsels, and taxing the Actions of Princes, which are too greedily receiv'd and hearken'd to, is moving of Sedition, and tends to turn the World upside down. Thus Jeroboam stirr'd up the People by those seditious Words, *What Portion have we in David, or what Inheritance in the Son of Jesse?* To your Tents, O Israel. Which Words blew up their Discontents, and caus'd the Revolt of ten Tribes from Rehobbam, 1 Kings 12. 16. And we have known, and felt too, the sad effects of reviling of Princes, and slandering the Footsteps of God's Anointed.

And as Sedition is rais'd by evil Speeches, so is it increas'd by seditious Books and Writings. The Tongue and the Pen often whet the Sword, and do more mischief than Guns and Cannons. Seditious Libels and Pamphlets corrupt the Loyalty of Subjects, and make them break into Factions and Tumults; they beget Cries of Persecution, and Clamours for Liberty and Toleration; which disturb and undermine Government, and hurl all things into Disorder and Confusion. This is the Nature, and these are the Effects of Sedition, which the Apostle reckons among the Works of the Flesh, Gal. 5. 20. and may be justly reckon'd among the Works of the Devil, who rules in the Hearts of the Children of Disobedience. He was the first Author, and is still the Promoter of all Sedition, which all Nations have punish'd with severe Penalties; beside which, 'tis necessary to call in the Assistance of Heaven, and say, *From Sedition, good Lord deliver us.*

II. We pray to be deliver'd from *Privity Conspiracy*; that is, from all secret plotting and contriving against our Governours. This is the Effect of Sedition; for when that hath stirr'd up the Discontents of the People, and prepar'd them,

the Deprecations in the Litany.

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them for farther Attempts, then do they combine and conspire together, either against the Life of the Prince, or for the Change and Subversion of the Government. And of such hellish Plots and Designs, all Histories afford us many Instances, which the good Providence of God hath been ever wont to discover and defeat, and seldom or never suffers them to succeed, unless it be to punish a wicked People. Such Conspirators have generally brought upon themselves their intended Mischief. *Haman's* plotting the Destruction of *Mordecai* and the *Jews*, turn'd upon his own head, and he himself was hang'd on that Gallows which he had prepar'd for them; as we read, *Eph. 6*. *David* speaks of some who took counsel against the Lord and against his Anointed, and makes frequent mention of Plots and Conspiracies form'd against him by *Saul* and the *Philistines*, by *Achitophel*, and his Son *Absalom*; all which, by the watchful Providence of God, prov'd abortive, and ended in the Ruin of the Contrivers. So he often tells us, that they fell into the Pit themselves which they had dug for him; and in the Traps and Snares which they had laid for him, were their Feet taken. But we need look no farther than the History of our own Country for black and tragical Instances of this kind.

What cursed Plots and Conspiracies were form'd against the Person and Government of the famous Queen *Elizabeth*? all which, however carry'd on in Darkness and Privacy, miscarry'd and ended in the Destruction of the Conspirators.

The Hellish Powder-Plot in the days of King *James I.* design'd to blow up the King and the three Estates of this Realm, is still kept fresh in remembrance: and tho it was manag'd with all the Arts of Invention and Policy, and back'd with Oaths and Sacraments of Secrecy; yet God was pleas'd to bring it to light, and the Conspirators to condign Punishment.

And we have had, ever since that time, many Plots and evil Designs for the Alteration of Religion and Government, which by the good Providence of God have been still disappointed and brought to nothing; and may the same Providence still continue to blast and defeat them.

But because the Malice and Subtlety of Satan is still the same, and because his wicked Agents and Instruments are ever busy in projecting evil and mischievous Deligns, we

have great reason to pray, From all Plots and *privy Conspiracies*, good Lord deliver us.

III. We are here taught to pray against Rebellion, and to say, *From Rebellion, good Lord deliver us.* This is the most heinous Sin, and the greatest Calamity that can befall a Kingdom, and to this the two former Steps naturally lead; for when Sedition hath prepar'd the way, by sowing the Seed of Discord in the Minds of the People, then do privy Conspiracies soon ripen it into Rebellion. So we read of *Sheba*, that he first blew up the Discontents of the People by seditious Speeches, and then blew the Trumpet to Rebellion; saying, *To your Tents, O Israel:* it began with the Tongue, and ended with the Trumpet; 2 Sam. 20. 1, 2.

Now Rebellion is the taking up Arms against a lawful Prince, or a forcible Resistance of the Supreme Power; which is a Crime so flagitious, that 'tis justly sti'l'd a *Fighting against God*, by lifting up the Hand against his Anointed. Such was the Rebellion of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*; whose rising up against *Moses and Aaron*, whom God had invested with his own Power, was look'd upon as a rising up against God himself, and was accordingly punish'd with a remarkable Judgment, the Earth opening its mouth, and swallowing them up alive, with all that appertain'd to them; as we read, Numb. 16. 31, 32. *Who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?* said *David* in the Case of *Saul*: meaning, that none can do so vile an Act without incurring the blackest Guilt. *Against a King* (saith *Solomon*) *there is no rising up;* for who can say to a King, *What dost thou?* that is, it cannot be done with Safety or a good Conscience. Our Saviour check'd St. Peter for drawing his Sword, tho' in the justest Cause (one would think) that could be; telling him, that he that useth the *Sword against lawful Authority, shall perish by the Sword.* *Thinkest thou* (saith he) *that I cannot command Legions of Angels to destroy all the Powers upon Earth?* And yet he chose rather to suffer, than to resist *Pilate*, whose Power he own'd to be given him from above, to leave us an Example to do likewise. St. Paul makes all *resisting the higher Powers to be resisting the Ordinance of God;* and declares, that *all that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation:* making no exception of Persons or Cases, when if any might be allow'd, the greatest might be made. St. Peter wills

wills us to be subject not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience towards God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully:

1 Pet. 2. 18, 19.

The great Pretence for Rebellion is to mend Matters that are amiss, to redress Grievances, to prevent future Evils, and to preserve Liberty and Property from the Invasion of Tyranny and Arbitrary Power. But alas! Rebellion instead of mending always marrs Matters, and makes them worse; instead of redressing, it always increases Grievances; and is so far from preventing future uncertain Evils, that it brings present and greater Evils upon us; instead of preserving Liberty and Property, it evermore destroys both: for 'tis attended with the Effusion of much Blood and Treasure, and the imposing of many heavy Burdens upon us, with a thousand other Calamities, that make the Remedy far worse than the Disease.

In short, Traytors and Rebels seldom go unpunish'd in this World; or if they are so fortunate as to escape that, they can never avoid the Damnation of the next: And therefore we may well pray, *From all Resistance and Rebellion, good Lord deliver us,*

Thus we see the three principal Evils that destroy the Peace and Prosperity of the State; to wit, *Sedition, Privy Conspiracy, and Rebellion.* There are also three that obstruct the Welfare of the Church, to wit, *False Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism;* from which we likewise pray to be deliver'd. And,

First, We pray to be deliver'd from all False Doctrine; by which we are to understand all Errors in Matters of Religion, together with all false Teachers that vent and propagate them. False Doctrine, like false Lights, misleads Men out of the right way that they should go; it carries them away from the Ways of Truth and Peace, and leads them into the Bogs of Error and Ignorance: and by this many are unhappily deceiv'd and misguided. And therefore our Saviour bids his Disciples to beware of *false Prophets, who come to them in Sheep's Clothing,* to insinuate their Errors by soft and fair Pretences, but inwardly are *ravenous Wolves,* that seek only to devour them. St. John advises, *not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God;* for many *false Prophets are gone out*

into the World: 1 John 3. 1. Where he wills us to try the Soundness of all Doctrines by the Test of God's Word, and according to their Agreement or Disagreement with that Rule, either to receive or reject them. St. Paul speaks of false Teachers, that creep into Houses, and lead captive silly Women laden with diverse Lusts, who are ever learning, but never come to the knowledg of the Truth; 2 Tim. 3. 6. 7. And of such he affirms, that they come, not to endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears; by which means they turn away their Ears from the Truth, and turn them unto Fables: 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. These consent not to wholesome Words, but broach Doctrines that are not according to Godliness; against which, we are advised to continue steadfast in the Apostles Doctrine, in Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer; and not to be like Children toss'd to and fro, and carry'd about with every Wind of Doctrine by the Sleight of Men and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Eph. 4. 14. These are the false Doctrines which we are caution'd against, and from which we here desire to be deliver'd, and that because of the many evil and pernicious Effects of them; for they corrupt our Notions concerning God and our selves, and take off the Impressions of Good and Evil, calling Evil Good, and Good Evil, putting Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness, and taking Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter; against which a Woe is denounc'd, Isa. 5. 20.

In a word, false Doctrine turns us away from the Paths of Life, that lead to Heaven and Happiness, and puts us in the Ways of Death, that lead to Blackness of Error and Darkness for evermore: and therefore, *From all false Doctrine, good Lord deliver us.*

Secondly, We pray in the next place against Heresy, which is the effect of false Doctrine; and these differ from each other in two or three things.

(1.) Error or false Doctrine may be sometimes involuntary, and proceed merely from Ignorance, Mistake, or want of due Consideration; for *humanum est errare*. The Weakness of Mankind may sometimes lead them into Error, but Heresy always implies wilful Error, and is ever attended with Obstinacy, and a resolute Refusal of all the means of better Information, Again,

(2.) Error

(2.) Error is oft-times about Things indifferent and Matters of external Order and Discipline ; but Heresy is always about Matters of Faith, by denying one or more of the Articles of our Creed : which being all plainly reveal'd to us in Holy Scripture, is the making of God a Liar, and is the highest Affront and Indignity, that can be offer'd to the Majesty of Heaven. Moreover,

(3.) False Doctrine may sometimes admit of Conviction, and they that vent it, may be brought to see their Error, and recant it ; but Heresy is a wilful persisting in it, and not only so, but an obstinate defending it with a pertinacious Infidelity. And therefore it was well said of one, *Errare possum, sed Hereticus esse nolo* ; I may possibly err by human Frailty, but I will not be a Heretick, by wilful continuing in, and maintaining of it, which makes it a provoking and incurable Enormity ; for that is an earnest contending, not for, but against the *Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, and is by St. Peter shil'd the bringing in damnable Heresies, denying the *Lord that bought them*, and bringing upon themselves swift Destruction ; 2 Pet. 2. 1. St. Paul reckons Heresies among the Works of the Flesh, which exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven, Gal. 5. 20. And therefore from Heresy good Lord deliver us.

Thirdly, We are here directed to pray against Schism ; From false Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism, good Lord deliver us. Now Schism is a causeless Separation from a true Church, and setting up a new Way of our own in opposition to it. 'Tis distinguish'd from Heresy, that being a revolting from the Faith, this from the Worship and Communion of the Church : which tho' some may ignorantly imagine to be rather a Virtue than a Crime, yet the Apostle truly reckons it a dividing the Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 1. 13. a Sign of Carnality, Chap. 3. 3. and a Symptom of Apostacy, 1 John 2. 19. Besides, Schism is a Sin attended with Pride and Self-conceit, in preferring of Mens private Judgment above all the publick Wisdom of their Superiors in Church and State. 'Tis accompany'd with Censoriousness, and uncharitable Judging of others as unholy and profane, as Persons not fit for them to communicate with, but to be separate from. Moreover, Schism is attended with Strife and Divisions, with bitter Envying, Clamour, and Evil-speaking ; which St. Paul severely rebuk'd in the Church of Corinth, and may be as sharply rebuk'd in ours, In a

word, 'tis attended with Hatred and Malice, with evil Designs, with Confusion, and every evil Work. And as the Sin of Schism is great, so is the Danger of it no less; for 'tis a Breach of the Peace and Unity of the Church, and dissolves all the Bonds of Love and Affection among Men; it rends the seamless Coat of Christ, and breaks his Church into Parties and Factions; which must deprive them of all the Benefits and Privileges that belong to it. Hence the antient Fathers accounted Schism so heinous a Crime, that it was not to be expiated even by Martyrdom it self.

In short, they that cut themselves off from the Catholick Church here on Earth, will be cut off from the Church Triumphant hereafter in Heaven; and therefore, *From Schism and Divisions, good Lord deliver us.*

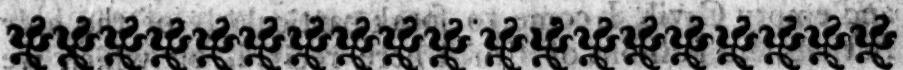
Thus I have open'd to you the principal Evils, that disturb the Peace, and destroy the Welfare both of Church and State; against which, our Prayers cannot be too hearty, nor our Endeavours too earnest.

There remain yet two great spiritual Evils, which tho' not so much observ'd, are yet no less fatal and dangerous to Soul and Body than the former: and they are, *Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of God's Holy Word and Commandment;* from which we likewise pray to be deliver'd.

For the First, Hardness of Heart is not only a grievous Sin, but a sore Judgment, and is never inflicted but on incorrigible Persons, who withstand all the Methods of Reformation. 'Tis occasion'd by a long Custom of sinning, and the deferring of Repentance, which by degrees wears off the Impressions of Virtue, and so the Heart becomes harden'd and insensible either of Good or Evil. And therefore the Apostle exhorts us, now whilst it is call'd to-day, to hearken to his Voice, lest our Hearts be harden'd thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin. This was the Case of Pharaoh, whose Heart God is said to harden, not by any positive Act, but by withdrawing his Grace, and leaving him, as he after did the Israelites, to follow their own Hearts Lusts; which by degrees harden'd their Hearts, and brought many heavy Plagues and Punishments upon them: and therefore, *From Hardness of Heart, good Lord deliver us.*

As also from a *Contempt of God's Holy Word and Commandment,* which always follows the former; for when the

the Heart is once harden'd, it seals up the Ears from Instruction, and makes Men deaf to all the Calls, Counsels or Commandments of God, or his Ministers: which is the heaviest Judgment that can happen to any Person or People; for it seals them up to final Impenitence, and consigns them over to eternal Damnation: and therefore from this and all the other foremention'd Evils, let us heartily pray to God, and say, *Good Lord deliver us:* Which God grant, &c.



DISCOURSE VIII.

St. MATTHEW vi. part of the 13th Verse.

But deliver us from Evil.

IN the former Part of the Litany, which I am yet explaining to you, we have had a brief Account of the sundry Evils of Sin and Punishment, from which we beg of God to save and deliver us.

But because so weighty and important a Request ought to be back'd with the most powerful and prevailing Motives to enforce it, our Church directs us to the best that can be us'd to that purpose; and they are taken from the holy Actions and Passions of our blessed Saviour in our behalf. We ask nothing for any Merits or Worthiness of our own, for we have none to plead; but for the great things that Christ hath done and suffer'd for us, by which he hath purchas'd Mercy, and obtain'd Favour for us. And these we are taught to urge upon him in the next Paragraph of the Litany, in these words: *By the Mystery of thy holy Incarnation, by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision, by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, good Lord deliver us.* Some have vainly objected against these words, as if they were here us'd by way of Charm or Conjuration, being usher'd in with often repeating the word *By*, according to the manner of Conjurers in their Spells and Charms. But these Men may as well accuse Christ and his Apostles for Conjurers, for using the same or like Terms of Obscurcation; with whom nothing is more frequent, than to ask or urge things by Motives taken from what is accounted most dear and sacred.

sacred. Our Saviour asketh many things of his Father, *By the Love that the Father beareth to his Son.* St. Paul beseeches the Romans, *By the Mercies of God,* Rom. 12. i. the Corinthians, *By the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ,* 2 Cor. 10. i. the Philippians, *By the Bowels and Consolations of Christ,* Chap. 3. the Thessalonians, *By the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 2 Thess. 2. i. And the holy Fathers of the Church generally us'd the like endearing Motives and Engagements in their Litanies and Prayers, as may be seen in most of the antient Liturgies. And therefore waving this as a frivolous and empty Cavil, I come to speak particularly of the holy Actions and Passions of Christ here recited, by which we pray him to deliver us. And the

THE PRACTICAL

First is, By the Mystery of thy holy Incarnation, good Lord deliver us: where, by *Incarnation,* is meant Christ's Manifestation in the Flesh; of which we read, 1 Tim. 3. 16. St. John tells us, that *the Word, which is the frequent Appellation of the Son of God, was made Flesh, and dwelt among us;* Chap. 1. 14. And the Author to the Hebrews, that *forasmuch as Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also took part of the same;* Chap. 2. 14. And there are many other Places in Scripture, that confirm the Truth of this Incarnation, which our Church here calls a *Mystery;* *By the Mystery of thy holy Incarnation:* and so the Apostle stiles it in the forecited place to *Timothy,* *Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness,* *God was manifest in the Flesh.* Now a *Mystery* implies so many Difficulties about the Truth of a thing, that it could not be known or believ'd without a Divine Revelation; and such is this of the Incarnation of the Son of God, which hath so many Wonders and Difficulties in it, as to exceed the Comprehension of natural Reason, and would never have gain'd Belief, had not the Time, Manner, and End of it been reveal'd to us by God himself. And as this is a *Mystery,* so is it by the Apostle stil'd, *without dispute a great Mystery;* which will be evident to any that considers the Greatness of the Person, and the Lowness of the Condescension, that the Son of God should descend from the Regions of Glory and Light inaccessible, to dwell in an earthly Tabernacle, and to veil the Splendor of his Majesty with a Body of Flesh: That He who *thought it no Robbery, or Usurpation, to be equal with God,* should be made in the *Fashion of a Man, and to take upon him the form of a Servant,* merely

ly to serve us. This is such an amazing Mystery or Miracle of Mercy, that the very Angels admire, and desire to pry into. Moreover,

The Apostle stiles it not only a great Mystery, but a Mystery of Godliness; and the Church calls it, the Mystery of his holy Incarnation, to signify the End and Design of it, which is to promote Godliness, and to make us holy in all manner of Conversation. To this purpose was the Son of God manifested (saith St. John) that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. And he gave himself for us (saith St. Paul) to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. The great End of Christ's taking our Flesh, was to sanctify and renew us by his holy Spirit; he came to make us holy, without which he could never make us happy, and to save us from our Sins, that he might save us from future and endless Sufferings. He never design'd to purchase a Liberty for us, to live or do as we please, or to let us loose to follow the Sway of our own corrupt Inclinations; for that would make it a Mystery of Iniquity, not a Mystery of Godliness: but he became the Son of Man, to make us the Sons of God, and by Grace to fit and qualify us for Glory. Hence his Incarnation is stil'd Holy, not only for the Holiness of his own Flesh, but from his working Holiness in ours: tho' he assum'd our Flesh, with all the Infirmities thereof, yet was all Sin excepted; he was still holy, harmless, undefil'd, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens. He appear'd in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, only to condemn Sin in the Flesh, to renew our Nature, and to sanctify us in Body, Soul, and Spirit; Rom. 8. 3.

Now this Mystery of Christ's holy Incarnation, is a most powerful Argument to persuade us against all Sin and Wickedness: for did the Son of God condescend so low as to take our Flesh, to subdue Sin in it, and to purify it from all Pollution; and shall we disappoint him herein, by continuing in Sin, and defiling it with fleshly Lusts? Let us therefore strive against, and forsake every evil Work which our Saviour came to destroy, lest we frustrate the end of his Incarnation, and cause the Son of God to come down from Heaven, and visit us in vain; but rather let us pray him to deliver us from all those Evils from which he came into the World to deliver us, saying, as we are here taught, *By the Mystery of thy holy Incarnation, good Lord deliver us:* which is the first Motive here mention'd to that purpose.

The

The Second is, *By thy holy Nativity and Circumcision, good Lord deliver us.* The Nativity or Birth of Christ, was the first Step he made into the World for our Salvation; for by that he took our Nature to atone for our Sins: And this his Birth was attended with such Circumstances of Meanness and Obscurity, that it may be reckon'd likewise the first Step of his Humiliation; for he was born in an Inn, wrapt in Swadling-Clothes, and instead of a Cradle, laid in a Manger. The Place of his Birth was *Bethlehem*, a poor unfrequent'd Village, the least among the Thousands of *Judah*, where *Augustus's* Edict called them to be taxed. The Time of his Birth was in the Night, a cold, dark, and helpless Night, without any the usual Attendance on such Occasions: and in the midst of Winter too, the sharpest time of the Year, the Blessed Virgin fell in Travail in a Stable, and there brought forth this King of Kings and Lord of Lords; which being in the Night, was discover'd by none but the poor Shepherds, who were then watching their Flocks. For the Manner of his Birth; it was in great Humility, not only void of all Pomp and Grandeur, but destitute of all ordinary Assistance and Attendance on such Solemnities. Thus the Son of God, who was begotten of the Father before all Worlds, was pleas'd, in the Fulness of Time, to be born of a Woman; and that too, not one of any high or noble Extraction, but a poor mean Daughter of *Israel*, the Virgin *Mary*; which made her acknowledg in her *Magnificat*, that God had regarded the low Estate of his Hand-maiden, in making her the Mother of the Son of God, and the Parent of her Saviour.

But tho the Birth of Christ was void of all Pomp, yet it was attended with the greatest Purity and Holiness, a much nobler and better Qualification, call'd therefore *his holy Nativity*; for his Conception was Immaculate, and he sprang from a Womb that was Unpolluted. He was born, not of the Will of Man, or the Lust of the Flesh, but of the Will of God, and by the overshadowing Power of his Holy Spirit: Tho he took our Nature and Infirmities upon him, yet was all Sin excepted, by which he was a holy, immaculate and undefiled Saviour, free from all Spot of Sin, to free us from the Guilt of it.

Now by this *holy Nativity*, we here pray to him to deliver us; that by the Purity and Condescension of his *holy Birth*,

Birth, we may be born again of his Holy Spirit ; that as he was pleas'd to partake of our human Nature, so he would vouchsafe to make us in some measure Partakers of his divine Nature ; that by his Humility he would subdue our Pride, and teach us to be like him, *meek and lowly in Heart.* In a word, that he being Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh, he would be pleas'd to pity our Miseries and Sorrows, and to *deliver us from all the Evils* that occasion them : Which is the second Argument or Motive here us'd and urg'd to that end.

The Third is, *By thy Circumcision, good Lord deliver us.* As by his Birth he was born of a Woman, so by his Circumcision he was made under the Law, which he fulfill'd in our stead to the utmost tittle. There was a Law given to Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, requiring every Male-Child on the eighth Day after the Birth to be circumcised ; by which he was received into the Covenant, and made a Member of the Jewish Church : of which we read, Gen. 17. Which Law was renew'd and repeated again, Lev. 12. 3. and was made a Seal or Sacrament of Initiation into the Covenant, to Abraham and his Seed for ever. Accordingly we read, that *when eight Days were accomplish'd,* the Blessed Virgin brought the Holy Child Jesus to be circumcised, according to the Custom of the Law ; Luke 2. 21. And being by that a Debtor to keep the whole Law, he submitted to the most painful Duties, and underwent the severest Curse of it for our sake.

Now this is here used as another powerful Argument to intreat him to deliver us from all Sin ; which was signify'd by the cutting off of the Fore-Skin of the Flesh : that as he submitted to the Circumcision of the Flesh for us, so he would grant to us the Circumcision of the Spirit. And as he thereby freed us from the Obligation to that, and all other painful Rites and Ceremonies of Moses's Yoke ; so he would deliver us from the much more grievous and burdensome Yoke of Sin, with all the Punishments threaten'd and annex'd to it : from which, *By thy Circumcision, good Lord deliver us.*

Fourthly, Another thing by which we pray for Deliverance, is the *Baptism* of our Blessed Saviour ; saying, *By thy Baptism, good Lord deliver us.* As there was a Law given to Abraham, requiring Circumcision as a Sign and Seal

Seal of Initiation into the Jewish Church, of which before; there was a Command under the Gospel, requiring Baptism as a Rite of Admission into the Christian Church. And tho' our Saviour Christ, being free from all Spot of Sin, needed neither for his own Purification; yet he graciously submitted to both for our Salvation, and to shew himself a Saviour both to the Jews and Gentiles. Of this latter, viz. the Baptism of Christ, we have an account in the third Chapter of St. Matthew; where we read, that our Saviour came to *John the Baptist*, to be baptiz'd of him. But *John* modestly refusing so great an Honour, said unto him, *I have need to be baptiz'd of thee, and comest thou to me?* Jesus reply'd to him, *Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness*, and to obey all the Ordinances of his Father. And so in all humble Obedience to his Good-pleasure, *John* perform'd this holy Office, and baptiz'd him in *Jordan* among the Penitents. After which Ceremony, our Saviour being to enter upon the Work of his Ministry, there was a double Attestation given to him from Heaven, to confirm the People in the Belief of his being the true promised *Messias*.

The one was the *opening of the Heavens*, and the Holy Ghost's visible descending upon him in the Appearance of a Dove, lighting and sitting upon him.

And this Appearance was seconded by a *Voice of Heaven*, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; bear him:* meaning, that God who was before highly displeas'd with Mankind, is now by the Means and Mediation of his Son well pleased and reconciled unto them; and having sent this his Son into the World to reveal his Mind and Will to us, he charges all Men to hearken unto him, and to receive his Word.

Now our Church makes use of this holy Baptism of our Lord, as another Motive to intreat him to deliver us; that he who preserv'd *Noah and his Family in the Ark* from perishing by Water, would receive us into the *Ark of his Church*, and by the Waters of Baptism save and defend us from all Evil: And likewise that he who led the People of Israel thro' the *Red Sea* to the Land of *Canaan*, would also safely conduct us thro' the *Waves of this troublsom World* to the *Land of everlasting Life*; but above all, that the Son of God, who suffer'd himself to be baptiz'd in the River *Jordan* for our sake, would sanctify Water to the mystical washing away of our Sins; that he would make the Fount to us the Laver

Laver of Regeneration; that being born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, we may be deliver'd from God's Wrath, and receiv'd for ever into his Favour; that as the Holy Spirit descended upon him in his Baptism in the *shape of a Dove*, so he would send down the Graces of his Spirit upon us, represented by the Meekness and Innocence of that harmless Creature. In a word, that as he was at his Baptism proclaim'd the *Beloved Son of God*, so he would thereby make us his beloved Sons, in whom he is well pleased in and thro him: And *by this his Baptism, good Lord deliver us.*

Fifthly, Another Motive here urg'd, is taken from our Saviour's fasting forty Days and forty Nights in the Wilderness, saying, *By thy Fasting, good deliver us.* Of this we have an Account in the fourth Chapter of St. Matthew, where we read, that *Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil*; and when he had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, he was afterwards an hungred. Before he enter'd upon his publick Ministry, that he might give an Evidence of his Piety and Trust in God, it was thought fit that some trial should be made of him: and the better to prepare himself for it, he thought fit to sequester himself in a private Recess, and to spend some time in Fasting and Prayer; from which Example, our Church hath taught us to begin all great Enterprizes, and particularly the giving of Orders, or entring Persons upon the Work of the Ministry, in like manner, with Fasting and Prayer: so did the Apostles, *Act's 13. 3.* and so do our Bishops to this day. And the antient Church, from Christ's Example, set apart yearly forty Days in *Lent* for a time of great Abstinence and Mortification, to prepare them for the better Celebration of the great Festival of *Easter*.

Now this long fasting of our Saviour was not out of necessity; for he that could feed thousands by Miracle, needed not himself to be in a Condition of Want and Hunger; and he whose was the Earth and the Fulness thereof, could not lack Necessaries: but he did it, to fit himself for his Conflict with the Devil, that evil *Spirit, that cannot be cast out but by Prayer and Fasting*; as also to expiate the Guilt of our Riots and Excesses. He fasted forty Days and forty Nights for our sake, to teach us such Abstinence as may subdue the Flesh to the Spirit, and keep under the Body, the better to help the pious Motions and Devotion

of the Soul. He needed no such help for himself, but only to leave an Example of Abstinence to us, and to vanquish the Power of Satan for us: and he having felt the Sharpness of Hunger, and the Hardships of Fasting, will be the more inclin'd to sympathize with and succour us in our Distress. And therefore our Church here urges this as another Motive to pity and assist, to make the Merit of his Fasting a means of our Deliverance, and to say, *By thy Fasting, good Lord deliver us.*

Sixtly, The last Motive here mention'd, is our Saviour's Temptation, which follow'd soon upon his Fasting: *By thy Fasting and Temptation, good Lord deliver us.* Now this Temptation or Trial was his Conflict with the Devil, of which we read in the forecited Chapter of St. Matthew, where we are told, ver. 1. that *Jesus was led up of the Spirit in the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.* He did not run himself into Temptation, or tempt the Devil to tempt him, as too many do; but he was *led up of the Spirit*, or as St Mark relates it, *the Spirit drove him into the Wilderness*, Mark 1. 12. Where the Devil taking the advantage of the Solitariness of the Place, set upon him, and attack'd him with sundry Temptations. His first Onset on him was to tempt him to a Distrust of God's Providence: for after his fasting 'tis said he was an hungred, and being then in the Wilderness, where no Provisions could ordinarily be had, he bid him not wait for any Relief from Heaven, which are long a coming; but if he were the Son of God, as he was proclaim'd and pretended, to *command the Stones before him to be made Bread*, to supply his present Necessity. To whom our Saviour reply'd, *It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;* Deut. 8. 3. intimating, that in Cases of Want and Hunger we may safely depend upon God's Providence, who is able with a word to supply all our Wants, as he did the *Israelites* in the Wilderness; and therefore we need not despair in the greatest Extremities. But when he could not prevail that way, he tempted him to Presumption, to *cast himself down from the Pinacle of the Temple*, trusting in the Mercy of God and the Care of his Angels to preserve him. To which he answer'd again, *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:* And such would his casting himself down be, when he could go down by ordinary Steps and Means. But he gave

not off so, but try'd again to tempt him to Idolatry, by shewing him all the Glories of the World, and offering all to him, if he would fall down and worship him. To whom he reply'd again, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And thus by the Weapon of God's Word, or the Sword of the Spirit, he foil'd him in all his Attempts; which made him go his way, and leave him. Now he submitted to all this, not upon his own account, for he needed none of these trials, but merely for our sakes, that he might be a merciful High-Priest, being in all points tempted like as we are. And therefore, By his Temptation, good Lord deliver us.



DISCOURSE IX.

St. MATTHEW vi. 13. latter part.

But deliver us from Evil.

ALL the Hopes of our Deliverance from Evil being founded on the Merits and Mercies of Christ, our Church in praying for it hath taught us to fetch all our Arguments from what he hath done and suffer'd for us, together with the Influence and Efficacy they have for the obtaining of it.

The Arguments taken from what he hath done for us, are summ'd and offer'd up in those words; *By the Mystery of thy holy Incarnation, by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision, by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation.* Of all which, I discours'd the last time, and shew'd how well they are urg'd for the delivering of us from all Evil.

The Motives or Arguments taken from what he hath suffer'd for us, are set forth and express'd in the following words; viz. *By thine Agony and bloody Sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost:* and of these I am now to treat. And for the better performing hereof, we must observe here,

First, The several Steps of our Saviour's Sufferings and Humiliation; to wit, *His Agony and bloody Sweat, his Cross and Passion, his precious Death and Burial.*

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Secondly,

Secondly, The several Degrees of his Exaltation; to wit, His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost: together with the Virtue and Efficacy of each, for procuring Deliverance for us. And,

First, We pray to be deliver'd by his Agony and bloody Sweat. This was the first Step of his Sufferings, that went before his Crucifixion; of which we have an account in the four Evangelists. St. Luke tells us, that our Saviour foreseeing the Extremity of his Sufferings drawing nigh, withdrew from his Disciples into a private place alone in the Mount of Olives; *Luke 22. 39.* St. Matthew calls the place *Gethsemane*, where the sad Apprehensions of what was coming upon him, fill'd him with great Terror and Amazement; *Mat. 26. 36.* For he was sorrowful, and very heavy (saith St. Matthew, ver. 37, 38.) yea, his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death. He was sore amaz'd (saith St. Mark, Chap. 14. 32.) and very heavy. His Soul was troubled, says St. John; and having tasted a little of the Bitterness of the Cup prepar'd for him, he pray'd his Father, ver. 36. if it were possible, that this Cup might pass from him; nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done. St. Luke tells us, that being in an Agony, he pray'd more earnestly; and as the Anguish increas'd, so did he pray a second and third time more and more earnestly, inso much that his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling to the ground, *Luke 22. 44.* Now whether this be only a figurative Expression, to set forth the Anguish and Horror of his Agony, that it occasion'd such a prodigious Sweat running down his Face, as resembled great Drops of Blood falling to the ground; or whether it were a Sweat of real Blood, actually and visibly falling from him; is made a question by Learned Men. However, some Naturalists have observ'd, that a Sweat of Blood may issue from a bad Habit of Body, and that a Vein may break, thro' a violent Passion of the Mind: and therefore such an extreme Agony as our Saviour was then in, might well enough produce real Drops of Blood; for he then found himself forsaken of all his Friends, and in his Apprehension deserted of God too: which made him in the Bitterness of his Soul to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* And such an extraordinary Heaviness and Commotion of Mind might work more than ordinary Effects upon the Body. However, from this place of St. Luke, 'tis probable this Passage

in the Litany was taken ; *By thine Agony and bloody Swear, good Lord deliver us.* And since the Extremity of his Agony was occasion'd by our Sins, and his groaning under the Weight of them was merely to make Atonement and Satisfaction for them ; we may fitly mind him of that heavy Burden, which his Human Nature, tho supported by the Divine, was scarce able to bear ; and by that beseech him to deliver us from that unsupportable Weight, which must necessarily sink us into eternal Perdition.

2dly, We pray to be deliver'd by his *Cross and Passion* ; that is, by his Crucifixion, or the Pains which he endur'd on the Cross. This was the second Step of his Sufferings, that went before his Death ; for Crucifixion of it self doth not necessarily import Death, since the Persons that suffer'd this way were not fasten'd to the Cross by any vital Part, that might soon dispatch them, but by the Hands and Feet ; which being far from the Heart, they are so long a dying, that being taken down in some time, they may be easily suppos'd to live. Now Crucifixion was a *Roman Punishment*, that was inflicted only on Servants and Slaves, never on Freemen or Citizens, unless it were for very heinous and flagitious Crimes : And yet to this, *Pilate* to please the People, tho against his own Conscience, knowing him to be innocent, sentenc'd our Blessed Saviour. Which Punishment was accompany'd with many Acts and Circumstances of Shame and Cruelty ; for they that were to be crucify'd, were, (1.) To be scourg'd and lash'd with many Stripes : and after that, (2.) To be stript of their Clothes, and to suffer naked. Then, (3.) they were to bear their Cross to the Place of Execution : And lastly, to have their Crimes written in capital Letters, and set over their Heads ; all which were executed on our Saviour with the utmost Severity. Again,

Such Malefactors, when fix'd to the Cross, were made the Objects of Scorn and Derision, and expos'd to all the Contempt and Scoffing of the rude Multitude ; and so was our Blessed Saviour, who hanging on the Cross, was upbraided with all his Miracles, revil'd, buffeted, and spit upon, with all the barbarous Indignities that could be offer'd by the vilest Miscreants.

Now our Saviour submitted to this accursed Punishment, not for any fault of his own, for *he did no Sin, neither was any Guile found in his mouth* ; but only to expiate our Guilt, and to save us from eternal Damnation : *He bore our Sins*

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in his own Body on the Tree, and by his Stripes we are healed. So that his Cross, the cursed Instrument of his Death, is to us a Tree of Life, and by his Shame and Sufferings we are advanc'd to Glory and Immortality ; and therefore we may thankfully remember and recount these things, and beseech him by all the Wounds, Bruises, Whippings, and Piercings, which he felt in his Body, to rescue and save our Souls : these being the Means, we may fitly make them the Motives of our Deliverance, and say, as we are here taught, *By thy Cross and Passion, good Lord deliver us.*

3dly, We pray to be deliver'd, *by his precious Death and Burial.* These were the two last Scenes of his Sufferings, by which he compleated the Work of Man's Salvation. Because *Death is the Wages of Sin, and the Soul that sinneth, it must die;* therefore our Saviour was content to die for us, and to make his Soul an Offering for our Sins. *He became obedient unto Death* (saith the Apostle) *even to the Death of the Cross;* which of all the ways of dying, was the most painful and the most shameful.

For the Painfulnes of his Death, the gaping Wounds and bleeding Side of our Saviour may easily satisfy us ; the goring of his Head with Thorns, the piercing his Hands and Feet with Nails, and his Side with a Spear, the long Furrows upon his Back, the stretching out and tentering his tender Limbs upon the Cross, and continuing for many hours in that tormenting posture, must needs render it both a lingring and a painful Death ; a Death wherein both the Wrath of God, and the Malice of Men, and the Rage of all the Powers of Darkness most fatally conspir'd. And this is here stil'd a precious Death, for the Price that was laid down, which was the precious Blood of the Son of God ; as also for the precious things obtain'd by it, which was the Ransom and Redemption of all Mankind.

And as his Death was thus painful, so was it no less shameful too ; for he died 'the infamous Death of Robbers, and the vilest Malefactors, being crucify'd between two Thieves, and numbred among Transgressors, enduring the bitter Taunts, Mockery and Reproaches of a rude insulting Rabble ; and when he had thus hung upon the Cross for the space of three hours, upon the tender Wounds of his Hands and Feet, he gave up the Ghost.'

Thus died the Son of God a miserable, shameful, and accursed Death ; which was follow'd with a Burial, like other Mortals, yea, like the worst of them : for he was not

not only buried, but descended into Hell ; he was crucify'd with Thieyes, and bury'd with Transgessors ; *He made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death,* saith the Prophet *Isaiah, Chap. 53. 9.* And tho he had done no violence, neither was any Deceit in his mouth, yet was he number'd with Transgessors, and inter'd like the sinful Sons of Men. Now since he underwent all these things for our Sins, we may well urge them as Motives for our Deliverance from them ; he was deliver'd for our Offences (saith the Apostle) that we might be deliver'd from the Punishment of them. And therefore we may well say (as our Litany here teaches us) *By thy precious Death and Burial, good Lord deliver us.*

Thus we see the several Acts and Degrees of our Lord's Humiliation, which are here urg'd as the Grounds of our Faith, and the Motives of our begging Deliverance from all Evil ; the great End for which our Saviour was pleas'd to undergo them.

From whence I proceed to the more glorious Acts of his Exaltation, which were likewise intended for the same purpose ; and they are contain'd in the next words : *By thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, good Lord deliver us.* Where,

1st, We pray him to deliver us by his glorious Resurrection. This was the first Step of his Exaltation, whereby he who was dead and bury'd, broke thro the Chains of Death, and passing thro the Grave, open'd for us the Gates of Everlasting Life. Christ rose from the Dead as our Head and Representative ; and as the Members follow the Head, so by his Resurrection will he in due time draw us after him : *Having loosen'd the Pains of Death, that we might not be holden of them ; for as by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection from the Dead ; and as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive :* 1 Cor. 15. But every Man (saith the Apostle) in his own order ; Christ the First-Fruits, and after that, they that are Christ's at his Coming. For as the First-Fruits betoken a farther Crop, and as an Earnest serves to secure a Bargain, so is Christ's Resurrection an Earnest and Pledg of ours ; and he being risen from the Dead, we are as secure from being swallow'd up of Death, as the Body is from drowning whilst the Head remains above water. That Divine Power that rais'd Christ from the Dead, can and will

quicken our mortal Bodies ; which made the Apostle triumph over Death and the Grave, saying, *O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is by the Apostle call'd the Power and Virtue of Christ's Resurrection, and by this we crave Mercy and Deliverance, saying, *By thy glorious Resurrection, good Lord deliver us.*

2dly, We pray to be deliver'd by his glorious Ascension. This, together with his sitting at the Right Hand of his Father, is the highest Step of his Exaltation, which he receiv'd as a Reward for his stooping so low for the Work of Man's Redemption. So the Apostle tells us, that he who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, did yet make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men; and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, and every Tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father: Philip. 2. 8; 9, 10, &c. By which it appears, that his Exaltation was the Effect and Reward of his Humiliation; so true is that Saying of his, *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He that descended* (saith the Apostle) *is the same also that ascended,* Eph. 4. 10. meaning, that Christ by going down to Hell, was advanc'd far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things. Now this his Ascension up to Heaven was visible to his Apostles, who were Eye-witnesses of it; for a little before his Ascent, he commanded them to go to Jerusalem, where he met them, and taking them up to the top of the Mount of Olives, he there told them, that the time was come of his going to his Father, and therefore he was then to take his leave of them; bidding them to be of good cheer, for he would not leave them comfortless, but would send a Comforter to them, that should supply the want of his Presence. And then as he was giving them his final Benediction, he was on a sudden parted from them, and mounted up slowly by degrees, so as they might for some time follow him with their Eyes, and discern his Motion, till being come up to some considerable height, a Cloud receiv'd him out of their sight, so as they could discern him

him no farther. And while they look'd steadfastly towards Heaven, behold two Angels stood by them in white Apparel, who told them, that this same Jesus should come again from Heaven in like manner as they saw him taken up. Thus did the Tongue of Men and Angels testify the Truth of his Ascension into Heaven; where he is not unmindful of us, but is ever making Intercession for us, procuring Acceptance of our Prayers, and preparing Mansions of Bliss and Glory for our Reception.

Now by this his glorious Ascension into Heaven, we pray him to deliver us from all Evil here upon Earth, that he being ascended up to Glory, would not suffer us to descend too deep into Misery, but would stand by and help us out of it, and deliver us from all that may bring us into it. His infinite Power by which he ascended, shews him able to succour us; and his continual Intercession at God's Right Hand, shews him willing to do it: and therefore we say, *By thy glorious Ascension, good Lord deliver us.*

Lastly, We pray to be deliver'd by the Coming of the Holy Ghost. A little before our Saviour ascended up into Heaven, he promis'd his Disciples to send to them the Holy Ghost, and to supply the lack of his corporeal by his spiritual Presence. To which end, they were commanded *not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me;* Acts 1.4. Now this Promise was, the Coming of the Holy Ghost; which our Saviour gave them in these words: *Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be endu'd with Power from on high;* Luke 24.49. And St. John told them the same, saying, *I indeed baptize you with Water unto Repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose Shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire;* Mat. 3.11. And to this the words in the *Acts of the Apostles* refer; *John truly baptiz'd with Water, but ye shall be baptiz'd with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;* Acts 1.5. According to which most gracious Promise, we read in the next Chapter, ver. 1, 2, 3, that the Holy Ghost came down upon them in the form of Fire, to enlighten their Minds with Knowledg, and to inflame their Affections with Zeal, and to inspire them with Gifts and Graces suited to the Work whereunto he had call'd them.

Now by all these Instances of his unspeakable Love and Kindness to us, we beseech him to deliver us. That he

who hath given us his Holy Spirit, the best and greatest of all Gifts, would likewise keep us from all the Dangers and Temptations of evil Spirits, who seek to deprive us of all the Joys and Comforts of the Holy Ghost. And this we are encourag'd to ask by that Saying of the Apostle; *He that hath given us his Son and his Holy Spirit, how shall he not with them freely give us all things?*

Thus I have, as the Litany directs, set before you the many Evils both of Sin and Suffering, from which we pray to be deliver'd. And here we must note, that

From the Evils of Sin, we are to pray absolutely and in general, from all the kinds and sorts of them, and particularly against those before recited; and among them, against any darling and beloved Vice, to which we are most inclin'd, and to set our selves more especially against the Sin that does too easily beset us.

Against the Evils of Suffering and Punishment, we are to pray only conditionally, and with Submission to God's Will; saying as our Saviour did of the bitter Cup's passing from him, *Father, not my Will, but thine be done.*

The Evil of Sin is like Poison, which works certain Death and Damnation both to Soul and Body, and so must be absolutely and without reserve pray'd against.

The Evils of Suffering and Affliction are like Physick, which however grievous for the present, may and oft-times do work together for Good, and tend to the Health and Salvation of Body and Soul; and therefore must be ask'd only as God in his Wisdom and Goodness shall think fitteſt for us.

I have also shew'd you the Motives and Inducements by which we ask to be deliver'd from these things; and they are taken from the Actions and Passions of our Blessed Saviour, which are the most powerful and prevailing Arguments that can be urg'd in this case: for his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and his sending the Holy Ghost, were all design'd to subdue Sin in us, and to deliver us from all the penal Consequents of it.

To conclude therefore; Let us all with ardent Desires and devout Affections put up these Petitions of the Litany to our Heavenly Father, so shall he who deliver'd up his own Son to death for us, not only deliver us from Death, and all the fatal Evils and Consequents thereof, but likewise instate us in everlasting Life and Glory: Which God grant;

grant, for the Merits of Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



DISCOURSE X.

St. MATTHEW vi. 13. latter part.

Deliver us from Evil.

HAVING spoken of the several Evils of Sin and Punishment, from which we pray to be deliver'd; as also of the several Motives and Arguments, by which we are to back and enforce such Petitions: There remain only the particular Times and Seasons, when we are more especially to offer up these Prayers for Deliverance. And of these we have an account in the next Paragraph of the Litany, in these words: *In all time of our Tribulation, in all time of our Wealth, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, good Lord deliver us.* Where after we are directed in the Matter and Manner of these Prayers, we have four particular Times and Seasons assign'd, for the more earnest and importunate presenting of them: of which therefore I shall speak something distinctly and particularly.

But before I enter upon them, we must here note in general, That we need constantly and at all times to offer up these Petitions; for we are daily expos'd to great Dangers and Temptations, and are hourly obnoxious to many and great Evils: we are always under the fear or feeling of some Misery and Calamity or other, from which, nothing but the Divine Care and Providence is able to relieve us; and therefore it can never be unseasonable for us to say, *Good Lord deliver us.* For which reason, our Saviour in his Divine Prayer, and our Church in all its Offices, have taught us constantly to pray to God *not to lead us into Temptation, but to deliver us from Evil.*

But yet there are some more particular Times, wherein we stand in need of more than ordinary Succour and Relief at God's hand; which Seasons are reckon'd to be these four: The Times of our Tribulation, the Times of our Wealth,

Wealth, the Hour of Death, and the Day of Judgment. At which times being apt to faint and sink under great Pressures, we want the strongest Cordials to relieve and support us. And,

First, We pray to be deliver'd in all Times of our Tribulation. This World is a Scene of Misery and Trouble, from which none, no not the best of Men, can plead any Exemption. *Through many Tribulations (saith the Apostle) must we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Yea, good Men are so far from being exempted from the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life, that they are commonly most exercis'd with them. *David, Daniel, and Job, had each of them a large share of such Trials:* yea, the Son of God had a bitter Cup mingled with Gall and Vinegar, and other bitter Ingredients of the divine Wrath, which he was made to drink off to the very dregs: neither doth this Cup wholly pass from us without tasting some of the Bitterness of it; *In the World ye shall have Tribulation,* saith our Saviour; and *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution.*

There are some publick Evils and Calamities, which we all bear in common; as Wars, Pestilence, and Famine. And there are other private Evils, which every one sustains in his own Person; as Sickneses and Diseases in the Body, Grief and Trouble in the Mind, Losses and Crosses in the Estate, Infamy and Disgrace in the Name, and the like; all which are the Lot and Portion even of God's own Children here in this Life: *Many are the Troubles of the Righteous,* saith the Royal Psalmist; but then he adds, for their comfort, that *God delivereth them out of all,* Psal. 34. 19. And ver. 22. *The Lord delivereth the Souls of his Servants,* and they that put their trust in him, shall not be destitute. And therefore the Litany directs us, in all such Troubles and Tribulations, to have recourse unto God for Deliverance; yea, God himself directs us to this course, saying, *Call upon me in the day of Trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me;* Psal. 50. 15. God Almighty delights not in the Miseries and Calamities of his People, but yet he finds it sometimes necessary to awaken them out of that Lethargy, in which Sin is apt to lull them asleep. And indeed, the Rod hath a rousing quality, and makes Men shake off that Laziness and Stupidity, in which they are too prone to indulge themselves: *In their Affliction (saith God)*

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they will seek me early. The Mariners in the Storm call'd each of them upon their God, whom in a Calm they had wholly forgotten and neglected. This is the sole End that God aims at in all our Afflictions, to drive us upon our knees, and to lead us nearer to him: and when they have this good effect upon us, when we hear the Voice of the Rod, and who hath appointed it, and by feeling the smart of it are brought to reform and amend our Ways, he soon removes the Rod, and takes more delight in embracing, than ever he did in punishing of us. And therefore in all times of our Tribulation, let us go to him by Repentance, and say, *Good Lord deliver us;* and then we shall not fail of a gracious Answer: for he will soon take away the Sting and Bitterness of the Affliction, or sweeten it with the most comfortable and reviving Cordials; and instead of falling into the hands of his Justice, he will receive us into the Arms of his Mercy: which is Encouragement enough to go to him for Deliverance, in all the needful Times of Trouble.

Secondly, We pray to be deliver'd *in all time of our Wealth;* that is, in all times of our Welfare and Prosperity: for Mony and Riches answering all things, and so begetting Plenty and Abundance, they were all antiently express'd by the name of *Wealth*, which is likewise attended with many and great Evils.

The Evils of Adversity are commonly Murmuring, Stealing, Sadness, and Despair, which are very grievous both to Body and Mind.

The Evils of Prosperity are Pride, Presumption, Wantonness, and Contempt of others, that have but a scantier Proportion, which have likewise a pernicious Influence upon Soul and Body; from all which we are to beseech God to deliver us. So did Agar in the Book of *Proverbs*, saying, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain:* Prov. 30. 8, 9. 'Tis well observ'd by one, that our whole Life is a mixture of Tribulation and Prosperity, our time being divided between these two, and that every one hath some share of both: for there is none so happy, but hath something of Misery; and there is none so miserable, but hath something of Happiness: so that to pray to be deliver'd in Tribulation

bulation and Wealth, is in effect to say, In all Estates and Conditions of Life, *Good Lord deliver us.*

But tho the Evils of Adversity are very great, yet the Dangers of Prosperity are much greater: for Wealth and Plenty are attended with so many and great Temptations, as make Men too apt both to forget God and themselves: And therefore we find God Almighty thus cautioning his own People, *When I bring thee into that good Land, which I swear unto thy Fathers, to give thee great and goodly Cities, which thou buldest not, and Houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not; and Wells digged, which thou diggedst not; Vineyards and Olive-Trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, from the House of Bondage:* Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12. intimating, that Wealth and Plenty are too apt to lead Men into a Forgetfulness of God that gave them: and this indeed is too often done by the wealthy and unthankful Sons of Men. For,

1. Prosperity is apt to puff Men up with Pride, to lift them up against their Maker, and to make them say with Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his Voice?* Je-surun waxed fat and kicked, (saith Moses) thou art grown thick and cover'd with Fatness; then he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteem'd the Rock of his Salvation: Deut. 32. 15. This hath made many forget their Prayers, neglect the Sacraments, and to turn the deaf Ear to all pious Instructions: the Haughtiness of their Head hath made them lift up the Heel, and to cast the Word of God behind their back. Again,

2. Wealth and Prosperity lead many into Luxury and all Excess of Riot, abusing themselves with God's Creatures, and turning the Instances of his Favour into the Instruments of his Dishonour. Gluttony and Drunkenness are the frequent Concomitants of Plenty and Abundance; making Men tarry too long at the Wine, and continuing until Night, yea all Night, till Wine inflame them: against which, many Woes are denounc'd, Isa. 5. 11, 22.

3. Wealth and Prosperity lead Men to Wantonness, and cause them to commit all Uncleanness with greediness: their Abundance adding Fuel to the Flames of Lust, and making provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof. *When I fed them to the full (saith God) they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots Houses:*

Houses : they were as fed Horses in the Morning, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife ; Jer. 5. 7, 8. This was the Case of Sodom, of whom we read, that *Fulness of Bread and Abundance of Idleness was in her*, Ezek. 16. 49. which first kindled the Flames of Lust in them, burning in their unnatural Lusts one towards another, and after kindled the Flames of God's Wrath against them, who rain'd down Fire from Heaven to consume them ; for which they are set forth as Monuments of Divine Justice, enduring the Vengeance of eternal Fire. Again,

4. Wealth and Riches are apt to beget Presumption and Self-confidence, making Men trust too much to their own Power and Wisdom : *I said in my Prosperity (saith David) I should never be moved ; thou, Lord, of thy Goodness hast made my Mountain to stand so strong : Psal. 30. 6, 7.* He began to be too confident of himself, till God hid his face from him ; then he soon saw his Error, and was troubled. Holy Job speaks of some, who make *Gold their Hope, and say unto fine Gold, Thou art my Confidence* ; Job 31. 24, 25, 28. who rejoice because their Wealth is great, and are lifted up because their Hands had gotten much ; which Job there styles, *an Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judge of the whole Earth*, as being *a denying the God that is above*. And therefore the Apostle charges us, *not to trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, that giveth us all things richly to enjoy* ; 1 Tim. 6. 17.

5. Wealth and Prosperity tempt many to Oppression and Cruelty ; for as it lifts them up with Pride and an over-valuing Opinion of themselves, so doth it occasion a Contempt and Under-valuing of others, which makes them not regard how hardly they are us'd : so that if they themselves swim in Plenty, they care not how others sink and perish under Penury. This Account the Psalmist gives of the Prosperity of the Wicked, and their Carriage under it, Psal. 73. where he tells us, that *their Eyes swell with Fatness, having as much as Heart can wish ; and this is the cause that they are holden with Pride, and overwhelm'd with Cruelty* : Yea, their Prosperity leads them sometimes to Atheism and a Contempt of God himself ; for the Psalmist tells us, that *they corrupt others, and speak of wicked Blasphemy ; their talking is against the most High, they set their Mouth against the Heavens, and their Tongue runneth through the Earth* : ver. 8, 9.

These are some of the many Evils and Dangers, to which Prosperity exposes us, and from which we pray God to preserve us ; saying, *In all time of our Wealth, good Lord deliver us.*

Thirdly, Another time when we are most earnestly to put up this Petition, is at our last Hour, or the Hour of Death ; saying, as we are here directed, *In the Hour of Death, good Lord deliver us.*

This is a proper Season to crave Mercy and Deliverance at God's hands, for then we are to struggle with our ghastly Enemies, and with all the Powers of Darkness, who at that time make their last and utmost Assaults upon us. Satan then will be very busy with us, and set upon us, as he did upon our Saviour in the Wilderness, with all his Artillery of Temptations ; seeking to drive some to despair, by shewing the Severity of God's Wrath and Justice against Sin, aggravating the Number and Greatness of theirs, so as to put them out of all hopes of Pardon. Others again he seeks to lead into Presumption, by setting forth the infinite Goodness and Compassion of God, as a Being made up all of Mercy ; that he never made any Creature to damn them ; and so flatters them into Security and Hopes of Mercy, without any Sense or Sorrow for their Misdoings. Sometimes he presents to the Fancy the gilded Vanities of this World, the Comforts of Friends, and other Conveniences of this Life, to make Men unwilling to leave them, and to keep their Minds from thinking and expecting of the greater Glories and Happiness of Heaven. Besides, Conscience then will be likewise busy with us, and ready to accuse us ; 'twill present us with the ghastly Prospect of the Sins and Errors of our Life past, and so set home the Guilt of them, as to fill us with Amazement and Terror. In short, we are then to conflict with our last Enemy, to grapple with the King of Terrors, and to struggle with the Pangs and Agonies of Death. So that then we need the highest Cordials to strengthen and support us, and the greatest Comforts to cherish and relieve our sinking Spirits. And these are nowhere to be had, but by having recourse unto God, and the Comforts of his Holy Spirit ; beseeching him to stand by, to succour, and deliver us in that dangerous and difficult Hour.

But what is it that we are to pray him to deliver us from, in the needful Hour of Death ? Why, not from
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the Stroke of Death, for that must unavoidably light upon all Men, for that all have sinned : *tis appointed to all Men once to die,* and there is no reversing of that fatal Sentence and Decree of Heaven.

But since that bitter Cup cannot pass from us, we are to pray to be deliver'd from the Bitternes and evil Consequents of it ; that is, tho' not from the Stroke, yet from the Sting of Death, which is Sin, that puts all the Venom and Malignity into it : that the Guilt of our evil Deeds may not stare us in the face at our departing Hour, nor startle us with direful Apprehensions of what may follow after it ; but that our Pardon may be seal'd in Heaven, before we go from hence, and be no more seen.

Moreover, we pray to be deliver'd from the bitter Pains and Agonies of Death, that God would give us a safe, easy, and comfortable Passage out of this World, and receive us into the Joys and Happiness of a better.

In short, we pray to be deliver'd from all the Horror and Terrors of Death, to have a Sense of the Love of God at our departing Hour, and of his Readines to receive us into his heavenly Habitations ; that we may die with a willing Mind, with a clear and absolving Conscience, and so resign up our Souls into God's hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and merciful Saviour.

All this is imply'd in this Petition, *In the Hour of Death, good Lord deliver us.*

And that we may obtain our Request, let us in our Health and Strength mind and prepare for that Hour. We all know that Death must and will come, but when and how, we know not ; and therefore it behoves us all to set our House in order, and to be ever ready for its coming. Let us pray for this Deliverance, whilst we have Time, and Sense, and Reason to do it, lest they all fail us in that needful Hour ; so shall our prepared Souls meet Death with comfort, and make it easy and welcome to us when it comes.

Fourthly, The last Season here mention'd, for craving Mercy and Deliverance, is the Day of Judgment ; In the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, good Lord deliver us. These two necessarily follow one another by God's own Appointment, Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed to all Men once to die, and after that to Judgment.* *The General*
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tainty of a Day of Judgment is an Article of our Faith, confirm'd both by Reason and Revelation ; for God having committed to us, as his Stewards and Servants, sundry Goods and Talents, we may reasonably conclude that there must and will be a Day of Reckoning to account for them, that every one may receive according to his Works. Besides, Divine Justice requires that good Men should be rewarded, and bad Men punish'd ; which not being always done in this Life, where righteous Men often suffer, and wicked Men prosper, we may safely conclude, that these things are reserv'd for the Determination of the Day of Judgment, when all these Matters shall be set right ; and then the Righteous shall go into Life everlasting, and the Wicked into everlasting Condemnation. So the Holy Scriptures, as well as natural Reason plainly testify ; for *God hath appointed a Day (saith the Apostle) wherein he will judg the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd ; of which he hath given us assurance, by his raising him from the dead : Acts 17. 31.*

Now in this weighty and important Season, we beseech God to deliver us, not from being call'd to Judgment, for that is fix'd by an irreversible Decree in Heaven ; *We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to what he hath done in the Flesh, whether it be good or evil.* But from the Terrors and amazing Fears of that dreadful Day, when the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat ; the Earth also, and the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up : as St. Peter describes it, 2 Epist. 3. 10. But chiefly we pray to be deliver'd from the Rigour and Severity of Divine Justice, that he would not enter into strict Judgment with us, for then none can abide it ; but that he will judg us with Lenity and Favour, that we may be found not in the filthy Rags of our own Righteousness, but in the white Robes of Christ's Righteousness, and find Acceptance thro his Merits ; that he would preserve us from the Guilt of our Sins, from the Accusations of Satan, and the Misgivings of our own Consciences ; and above all, from the black Sentence of Condemnation, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, &c.* and may hear that happy Sentence of Absolution, *Come ye Blessed of my Father, &c.* To which end, let us daily remember and prepare for the Coming of that terrible Day, that we may

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find Mercy and Favour at that needful time. And therefore, *In the Day of Judgment, good Lord deliver us.*

And thus I have done with the Second Part of the Litany, which contains Deprecations and Prayers against all Evil: The Third contains Petitions for all Good, and Intercessions for all Men; of which hereafter.



Vol. II.

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On



On the INTERCESSIONS in the LITANY.

DISCOURSE XI.

1 Tim. ii. 1.

I exhort, that first of all Supplications, and Prayers,
and Intercessions be made for all Men.

H AVING finish'd the Second Part of the Litany, which consists of Supplications and Prayers against all kinds of Evil; together with the most effectual Means and Motives to be us'd in offering them up, which are taken from all that Christ hath done and suffer'd for us; as also, the particular Times and Seasons when we are more especially to ask Deliverance from them, *viz.* in Times of Tribulation, of Wealth, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment:

I come now to the Third Part of the Litany, which consists of Prayers and Intercessions for all manner of Good to our selves and to all Men. A bare Freedom from Evil is but a negative part of Happiness; 'tis the positive Fruition of Good that compleats the Felicity. And therefore our Church, according to the Direction of our Text, to Supplications for Deliverance from Evil, adds Prayers and Inter-

Intercessions for the obtaining of all Good ; and that not for our selves only, which would bespeak a narrow and contracted Spirit, but for all Men, for whom we are to enlarge our Devotion and Charity.

Now this Part of the Litany begins with these words : *We Sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God; and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church Universal in the right way.* To which is subjoin'd the People's Consent and Concurrence herein ; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* In which Words we may observe,

First, A Petition for Audience, by way of Preface or Introduction to the following Petitions, in these words ; *We Sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God.*

Secondly, An Intercession for the whole Catholick Church, in these words ; *That it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church Universal in the right way.* Both which are utter'd by the Minister.

Thirdly, The People's Answer and Agreement in it, in these words ; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Which is added and repeated in the Close of each Petition, and is the Burden of this part of the Litany.

First then, I must consider the general Petition for Audience, which relates to all the following Petitions, in these words ; *We Sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God.* Where we have a Confession of Sin, by owning our selves to be Sinners, *We Sinners* ; and an humble Request for the Acceptance of our Prayers, *We beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God.* For the first, 'tis necessary to the Audience and Acceptance of our Prayers, to acknowledg our selves to be Sinners : for he that will not own himself an Offender, seldom or never finds the favour of a Pardon ; whereas the confessing our selves Sinners, is apt to beget that Shame, Sorrow, and Repentance, that intitles us to Mercy, and hath the Promise of Pardon entail'd upon it. The poor Publican's short Litany, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner!* prevail'd more for his Justification, than all the vain Boasts of the proud Pharisee. He that is touch'd with the Sense of his Sins, and owns himself to be a Sinner, is more likely to abhor and abandon his evil Courses, which is the true way to Mercy, than he that conceals or continues in them, which render him incapable of all Favour and Forgiveness ; for Solomon tells us, that 'tis only the confessing

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and forsaking of Sin, that finds Mercy; Prov. 28. 13.

Besides, by confessing our selves Sinners, we disclaim all Merit and Worthiness of our own, and cast our selves wholly upon the Mercies of God and the Merits of Jesus Christ; which is a good Qualification of an humble Suppliant, and a main Ingredient of an effectual Prayer. And therefore the Rule of our Church is, to usher in our Prayers with Confession of Sins; which we have all reason to do, for *in many things we offend all*, and if we say that we have no Sin, we are Liars, and the Truth is not in us. These then must be remov'd by Confession, as the Obstacles of true Devotion, and Hindrances of the Success of it. Thus the Litany here teaches us first to call our selves Sinners, *We Sinners*; and then,

2dly, To beseech him to hear us, as our Lord God. This is the Order we are to observe; for if we regard Iniquity in our Hearts (saith holy David) the Lord will not hear our Prayers, Psal. 66. 18. And that not for want of any Inclination or Willingness in God; for his Hand is not shorten'd that it cannot save, nor his Ear heavy that he will not hear, saith the Prophet Isaiah, Chap. 59. 1, 2. but your Iniquities separate between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. So that this Clog is to be remov'd, before our Prayers can mount up to Heaven: and that can only be, by humbly confessing and forsaking of Sin, and turning unto God with full purpose of Heart; and then he will turn his merciful Ears to our Prayers, and return a gracious Answer to them. If we confess our selves Sinners, and amend our Ways, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.

But do we not read in the Gospel, that God heareth not Sinners? John 9. 31. If then we are Sinners, how can we hope to be heard? In answer to this, 'tis not all Sinners whose Prayers are rejected, for then none would be heard, there being no Man living that sinneth not; but 'tis only the obstinate and impenitent Sinners, that resolve to continue in their sinful Courses without Remorse or Repentance: these shutting their Ears against God's Precepts, make him shut his Ears against their Prayers; whereas he willingly hears the penitent and returning Sinners, and readily receives them into the Arms of his Mercy, as may be seen in the returning Prodigal, who coming back to his Father with Contrition and Sorrow for leaving him, and saying with Tears and Grief, that he had sinned against his

his heavenly and earthly Fathers, and was not worthy to be accounted a Son or Servant to either, was in his return met by his Father, who not only heard, but kiss'd and embrac'd him, commanding the best Robe to be put upon him, and to be entertain'd with the best Provisions. Thus God still hears and receives all that have wander'd and stray'd from him, when they amend their ways, and truly turn to him. Hence the Litany here teaches us first to acknowledg our selves Sinners, and then to ask him to hear and receive our Prayers; saying, *We Sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God.* Which was the first thing to be spoken to, as a Preface to the following Petitions, that we may the better succeed in our interceding both for our selves and others. Which is

The next Thing to be treated of, to wit, to direct us in making our Intercessions for all Ranks and Degrees of Men. And because the Holy Catholick Church of Christ is the prime Society upon Earth, and is most and principally in his Heart and Care, therefore ought it to be first in our Prayers and Intercessions. Accordingly our Church here directs us to begin with that, and first to intercede for the Holy Catholick Church, in these words, *viz.* *That it may please thee to rule and govern thy Holy Church Universal in the right way.* The Catholick or Universal Church is in Scripture call'd, *The Spouse of Christ*, and is the common Mother of all Christians, by whom we receive our new Birth, and are admitted into Christ's Family. Therein we receive the Adoption of Children, by which we are made Heirs of Salvation, and Joint-Heirs with his Son of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now for this blessed Society we pray, that it may be ever preserv'd by Divine Providence, that it may be guided and govern'd by his Wisdom, and defended by his Power. And to this we have sufficient Encouragement, from Christ's most gracious Promise, to be ever with his Church to the World's end, Mat. 28. ult. and that the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it, Chap. 16. 18.

To this end we intercede in its behalf, that it may be still guided and govern'd in the right way. Which may imply these three things:

1. That it may be ever led into all Truth, and thereby preserv'd from all Errors and Heresies.

2. That it may be always fence'd with a holy Discipline, and thereby preserv'd from all Faction and Confusion. And,
3. That it may be still united in one holy Communion, and thereby preserv'd from all Sects and Divisions. These things are all necessary to the well-governing of the Universal Church, and to the keeping of it in the right way; and therefore are to be pray'd and endeavour'd for to that end by all its Members.

I. I say, that the Church may be rul'd and govern'd in the right way, we pray that it may be preserv'd in true and-sound Doctrine, and thereby kept from all Errors and Heresies. This our Saviour, in settling his Church, made his first and principal Care, as a Prophet revealing to his Disciples and Followers the whole Mind and Will of his Father, and instructing them in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. And at his departing out of the World, he sent them the Holy Ghost, to lead them into all Truth necessary to Salvation, and to bring to their remembrance all that he had said unto them. He hath left us a Form of sound Words in his Divine Prayer, for a Rule of our Devotion, that we may pray aright; he hath given us an Exposition of the Decalogue, in his Sermon on the Mount, for a Rule of our Actions, that we may do aright; and his Apostles after him have in their Creed given us a Rule of Faith, that we may believe aright. All which direct us in the right way in Matters of Doctrine, and the necessary Points of Faith. Whilst we hold fast these Forms of sound Words, we walk in the strait Path of Life and Salvation; but when we swerve or vary from them, we wander in the By-Paths of Sin and Error, and so fall into the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction. St. Paul speaks of some *false Teachers*, that *turn many from the Truth, and turn them unto Fables*. And St. Peter of others, that *bring in damnable Errors and Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them..* And God Almighty is pleas'd to permit these things for the trial of our Constancy and Sincerity; for *there must be Heresies* (saith the Apostle) *that they who are approv'd may be made manifest*. Now because we can neither find nor keep in the right Way of Truth, nor avoid the wrong Ways of Error, without the Guidance and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, we pray him to rule and govern his holy Catholick Church in the right way of Truth and sound Doctrine.

2. That the Church may be kept in the right way, we pray God to guard and fence it with a holy Discipline, to preserve

preserve it from Disorder and Confusion. No Society of Men can subsist without Rule and Government, much less can the Sacred Society of the Church continue without Order and Discipline. And because all Discipline and Government requires Authority in some to rule, and Submission in others to be ruled by them; therefore our Saviour Christ hath appointed a Subordination of Officers in his Church, to preserve Order, and to prevent Confusion. Hence we ready, that he gave ~~some~~ to be ~~Doubtless~~, some Prophets, some Restors, and ~~some~~ Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ; Eph. 4. 11. And elsewhere; He hath first, ~~first~~ in his Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, and thirdly Teachers; 1 Cor. 12. 28. Where the Apostles are always reckon'd first, not only in Order of Time; but in Order of Dignity and Jurisdiction; for they presided over, ordain'd, and directed the rest; and as the Apostles died, some of the others were elected into their place, as ~~Judas~~ was into the place of Judas, which was simply a Primacy of Order and Dignity in the Apostolical Office; for the preferring another is never to the same or worse station; but always to something higher and better than he was in before; and every higher Office necessarily supposes some higher degrees of Power. In the Old Testament, God Almighty appointed three Orders in the Jewish Chnrch, viz. the High-Priest, the Priest, and the Levite; which were succeeded in the New, by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons: And these continue to this day, for the better governing and instructing the Christian Church in the right way; for the Church is a Body liable to Disorders as well as the State, and too many err and stray from the way they should go in both: and therefore Government is as necessary in the one as the other, that Matters may go right in both. God hath stil'd himself a God of Order, and not of Confusion; and hath requir'd, that all things in the Church be done decently and in order: he is the Author, not of Disorder, but of Peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints; 1 Cor. 14. 33, 40.

Now Order cannot be kept up by Chance, nor will the common People of themselves observe that Decency that is requisite in the Service of God. And therefore there must be Governours in the Church for the well-ordering of these things, that they who are in the wrong, may be guided into the right way; and they who are already in it, may be kept and encourag'd in it: So that when we pray God,

to rule and govern the holy Church Universal in the right way, we pray not only that sound Doctrine, but a good Discipline may be ever preserv'd and continu'd in it ; that Christ's Vineyard may be well fenc'd and guarded against the wild Boar of the Forest, that would root up, and against all the little Foxes that would undermine it ; that Peace and Truth may ever flourish in it, and all Error and Confusion be banish'd from it.

3. That the Universal Church may be rul'd and govern'd in the right way, we pray that all the Members of it be united in one Fellowship and Communion, to keep it from Sects and Divisions. This is likewise necessary to its Welfare and Preservation ; for as Strength and Safety are main-tain'd by Union, so Weakness and Destruction are the effects of Division. *A House divided against it self* (saith our Saviour) *cannot stand* : And a Church rent into sundry Sects and Divisions, is continually in danger. And therefore Christ pray'd to his Father for Unity among all his Followers, *that they all may be one* (saith he) *as thou, Father, art one in me, and I in thee, so they may be one in us* ; John 17. And St. Paul presseth this in all his Epistles. In his Epistle to the Romans, he wills them *with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God* ; Rom. 15. 6. And bids them to mark those that cause Divisions, not to follow, but avoid them ; Chap. 16. 17.

In his Epistle to the Corinthians, he beseeches them to speak all the same thing, that there may be no Divisions among them, but that they be perfectly join'd together in the same Mind and the same Judgment ; 1 Cor. 1. 10. And elsewhere sharply rebukes their Divisions, as Signs of Carnality, and Subverters of Christianity ; Chap. 3. 3, 4.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he heaps up many Arguments to Unity and Concord ; exhorting them to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, to tye them together in one Fellowship and Communion ; Eph. 4. 3, 3, 4.

In his Epistle to the Philippians, he intreats them by all the Endearments of Christianity to be like-minded, and to meet together with one Accord and one Mind ; Phil. 3. 1, 2.

By all which, and much more that may be urg'd for Unity and against Divisions, it plainly appears, that to rule and govern the Universal Church in the right way, is to preserve an Unity of Faith and Communion in it, and not to give liberty to all Sects to make Parties and Factions, and to let them loose to all Extravagances in Religion ; which

is the great Malady and Misery of our unhappy Age. Thus we see the Sense of this Petition, wherein we pray that it may please God to order and direct the Universal Church in the right way, by preserving in it sound Doctrine, a strict Discipline, and a holy Communion. And more especially we pray for that part of the Catholick Church, which is planted and establish'd in these Nations; that all the Members of it may agree in the Truth of God's holy Word, and live in Unity and godly Love.

From whence I proceed, in the last place, to the Answer and Assent of the People to this Petition, in these words; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Our Church, to quicken and inflame the People's Zeal, hath allotted them a share in the publick Devotions: and because a long continu'd Prayer uttered by the Priest alone is apt to create Weariness and Dulness in the People, therefore the Church hath broken it into many short and pithy Petitions, ordering the People to bear a part, and strike in, in the close of each, with their *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Which being often repeated here in the Litany, and added to every Petition, I shall here once for all say something to the Sense and Reason of it. 'Tis a Petition often us'd by David in the Book of Psalms, and 'tis very pertinent to be put up in all our Prayers, to shew the Agreement of Minister and People in what they ask, and to obtain the Success and Audience of them. *Hear me when I call, O God of my Righteousness,* (saith the Psalmist) *be merciful unto me, and hear my Prayer;* Psal. 4. 1. And almost in every Psalm we find him saying, *Give ear, O Lord, unto my Words, and hearken unto the Request of my Lips:* which gave occasion to the frequent Repetition of this pious Ejaculation, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Where we may observe,

(1.) The Humility and Earnestness of the Expression, in the word *Beseech*: we presume not to command, or to urge any Worthiness in our selves, but in the humble way of Suplicants we only *beseech*.

(2.) The Person we apply to, we *beseech thee*; we seek not to Saints and Angels, who are ignorant of our Wants, and unable to supply them, but unto God, who is alone able to hear and help us.

(3.) The Request we make to him, and that is, to hear us; *We beseech thee to hear us:* which signifies not barely the lending an ear, but the reaching out the Hand to succour and relieve us.

Lastly,

Justly. The Motive so encourage us, in the words good Lord, signifying, that his Goodness inclines him to hear us, and his Greatness enables him to help us. *So help me God.*
 This pious Petition is here appointed for the People, which they should not be backward to offer, for that betrays a Coldness and Unconcernedness in their Prayers; but rather at the end of every Petition, with pure Hearts and humble Voices to say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord;*

so help me God. But when we have done, then let us

say, Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,

thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven,

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE XII.

THIS is the second Part of the Discourse, concerning the *Prayer of Intercession.* *Exhortation to make Intercessions for Kings, and all that are in Authority.*

IN the first Verse the Apostle exhorts, that Prayers and Intercessions be made for all Men; to whom we are all ally'd by all the Ties of Nature and Religion, and therefore stand oblig'd to wish and do them all the good we can. So the same Apostle elsewhere exhorts, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all Men, Gal. 6. 10.* And we cannot do a greater, than to pray for them.

According to this Direction, the Litany teaches us in the first place to make Intercession for the whole Catholick Church, in whose Welfare consists the Good of all Mankind; for if that be guided and govern'd aright, it will lead us all in the right way, and bring us at last to the right End, the Salvation of our Souls: And this was the Subject of our last Discourse.

In the next words of our Text, the Apostle exhorts more especially and particularly to make intercession for Kings, and all that are in Authority: who are the principal Members and Supporters of the Catholick Church, upon whom next under God the Peace and Prosperity of the Church chiefly depend. For Kings are stil'd nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers to the Church, Isa. 49. 23. and God is said to make it suck the Breasts of Kings, and thereby shew himself the Lord our Saviour, the Redeemer, and the Mighty One of Jacob; Chap. 60. 16. And indeed 'tis by

the Care, Valour, and Vigilance of Princes, that God w^t pleas'd to protect and preserve his Church, and therefore we are concern'd, in point of Duty and Interest, to pray, and make intercession for them. Suitable hereunto,

The Litany in the next Paragraph, of which I am now to treat, directs us to make intercession for the King, as nursing Father to the Church, in these words; That it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in Righteousness and Holiness of Life, thy Servant GEORGE, our most gracious King and Governor. To which the People answer, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord. In speaking to which, I must observe,

First, The Titles here given to his Majesty, which in respect of God, is, Thy Servant GEORGE; in respect of his Subjects, is, Our most gracious King and Governor.

Secondly, The Petitions we put up in his behalf, which are, that God would keep and strengthen him in the true worshipping of him; and that it may be attended with Righteousness and Holiness of Life. Of each of which something particularly: And,

First, Of the Titles here given to his Majesty; and they are, first, in respect of God, his Servant, Thy Servant GEORGE: and so indeed all Kings and Queens are to reckon themselves; for tho in relation to their Subjects they are Masters, and not accountable to them for the Use and Abuse of their Power, yet in relation to God they are Servants and Stewards, and must render an account of both. Hence we find God Almighty often calling King David by the name of his Servant David; *I have found David my Servant (saith he) with my holy Oil have I anointed him;* Psal. 89. 21. And Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, is by God himself call'd his Servant, Jer. 26. And the same Appellation of Servant is frequently given to Kings and Queens in Holy Scripture: and justly too,

1st, Because they receive all their Power and Authority from God, and act by his Commission, and so are his Servants and Substitutes; *By me Kings reign (saith he) and Princes decree Justice,* Prov. 8. 15. Our Saviour own'd Pilate's Power to be from God, saying, *Thou couldst have no Power over me, except it had been given thee from above,* John 19. 11. And the Apostles acknowledg'd the Power even of their Heathen Emperors to be deriv'd from God; for there

is his Power but of God, (saith St. Paul) the Powers that be, are ordained of God; Rom. 13. 1. 'Tis God that setteth up Kings, Phil. 7. 8. The Most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of the Earth, and giveth them to whomsoever he will; Dan. 4. 17. By all which it appears, that the Power of Princes is from above, and so they are all the Servants of the Most High, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. They receive not their Power from the People, for they have none to give, being all bound to Obedience and Subjection; and so are none of their Servants, as some would vainly persuade them they are, which wicked Principle hath occasion'd much Bloodshed and Confusion. But all their Power being entirely from God, who hath Authority over Prince and People, and hath commission'd the one to bear Rule, and commanded the other to be subject and obedient to them; they must needs be the Servants of God, and not of the People: for 'tis absurd to say, that Princes are Servants to those, over whom they bear Rule; which is to say, that 'tis all one to command and obey, and that the Inferior is above the Superior. Hence the Scripture stiles the Supreme Magistrate the *Minister or Servant of God*, Rom. 13. 4. because he hath all his Power from him, who hath requir'd all Subjects to submit to him for the Lord's sake; that is, for the sake of the Authority deriv'd upon him.

From whence it follows, that Kings and Queens are accountable to God only, whose Vice-Roys and Deputies they are, and not to the People, who are subjected to their Rule and Governance. That they are to give an Account of themselves and their Actions unto God, is as evident, as that Servants and Stewards are accountable to the Masters that intrust and employ them. And such we see Princes are unto God, who gives them their Authority. They are bid *not to bear the Sword in vain*, nor suffer it to rust in the Scabbard, but to draw it forth, *to the terror of Evil-doers, and to the praise and defence of them that do well*. And therefore they are said to be the *Ministers of God for Good*; that is, to reward and encourage the Good, and to punish and restrain the Bad: and they will be call'd to a Reckoning at God's Tribunal, as well as others, for the Good or Evil they have done; for *he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there is no Respect of Persons with him, and mighty Men shall be mightily tormented*. But yet that they are not accountable to their Subjects here, is no less evident; for being constituted Supreme in their Dominions,

and

and plac'd in a Sphere above the People, they can have no power over them, either to restrain or call them to an account : for who can say to a King, What doest thou ? And is it fit (saith holy Job) to say unto a King, Thou art wicked ; and to Princes, ye are ungodly ? Job 34. 18. But there is a Higher than they, who will in due time reckon with them. In the mean time, let us not forestal the Day of Judgment, by judging another Man's Servant, and much less the Lord's Anointed, before the time ; for to his own Master he standeth or falleth, yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand : Rom. 14. 4. Let us not then arraign Princes at our Tribunal, who are reserv'd only for God's; but let us pay them that Respect and Observance that is due to their high Station, and not arrogantly invade the Rights of Sovereignty.

This is the first Title here given to Princes, they are the Servants of the Most High ; and thus we stile his Majesty, *Their Servant GEORGE*. The other is with relation to us, and so he is *Our most gracious King and Governour*. Tho' Princes with respect to God are truly and properly Servants, being intrusted by him with the Care of his People, yet in respect of the People they are their Masters and Governours, having the Oversight and Command of them. *Thou leadest thy People like Sheep* (saith David) *by the hand of Moses and Aaron* ; who are therefore call'd the Shepherds of the People, to guide and govern them in the right way. This was indeed the End of God's setting up Kings and Queens, and raising them above the level of other Persons, that they may enact Laws for the Preservation of Peace, Order, and Justice among the People, and duly execute them for that purpose.

Without Government all things would run to ruin, armed Violence would carry all before it, and every one would groan under all the Miseries of Outrage and Oppression : to prevent which Evils, God chuses some out of the People, and invests them with his own Power, to preserve Order and good Government in the World. So he chose *Saul, David, and all the Kings of Israel*, to prevent Anarchy and Confusion ; for when there was no King in Israel, every one did what was right in their own eyes. And so it would be still with us, if the good Providence of God did not send us gracious Kings and Queens to rule and govern us. Now from hence it follows, that these are not to be oppos'd, resisted, or controul'd by any of their Subjects;

for that will run all things back again into Anarchy and Confusion, and frustrate all the Ends of Government: yea, to resist the Power that God hath set over us, is to resist and fight against God, as to affront an Ambassador, or any commission'd by a Prince, is to affront the Prince himself; *Whoever resisteth the Power* (saith the Apostle) *resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.* And therefore God Almighty strictly cautions against it himself, saying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* So tender is God of their Welfare, that he will not have them so much as touch'd by any violent Hand, so far is he from allowing any fighting or taking up Arms against them: yea, tho' they should happen sometimes to overstrain and abuse their Power, yet this does not void their Authority, or give Subjects any Commission to resist; they are still the Ministers of God and our Governors for all this, or else the *Roman Emperors* could not be so, when the Apostle presses Subjection to them as such: yea, under the very worst of them, St. Peter will'd Subjects to *submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake*; that is, either actively by doing what it requir'd, or passively by suffering what it threatened. He allows no Resistance in any Case, either against the King as Supreme, or those that are commission'd or sent by him; for *this is thank-worthy* (saith he) *if a Man for Conscience towards God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully*; 1 Pet. 2. 19.

In short, if Kings and Queens are appointed by God to be our Governors in his stead, as most manifestly they are, then are we to honour their Persons for the sake of Him whom they represent, and obey their Laws, which are stamp'd with a Divine Authority. To which ends, God hath given them his own Name, *I have said ye are Gods*, to procure to them the Reverence and Veneration of Mankind; and hath made their Persons sacred and inviolable, to secure them from all Contempt and Violence. And our Text exhorts us, to *make Prayers and Intercessions for them at the Throne of Grace, that we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty*; for *this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*

But what is t that we are to intercede for in their behalf? Why that, our Litany here tells us, is, *That it may please God to keep and strengthen them in the true worshipping of him, and to preserve them in Righteousness and Holiness of*

the Intercessions in the Litany.

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of Earth. For the first, the primitive Christians pray'd for the Conversion of their Heathen Emperors and Persecutors, that God would turn them from their Idolatry, to the pure Worship of the true God ; but (thanks be to God) we have no need now to put up that Petition, our Kings and Queens having embrac'd Christianity, and are become the Patrons and Defenders of it. So that now our Prayers are, that God would *keep and strengthen them in the true Worship* they have embrac'd; and confirm them so as they may continue in it, that no Temptations of worldly Greatness, or sensual Pleasures, may ever entice or draw them from it ; but that they may always remain firm and steadfast in the Profession and Practice of the true Religion, and become the Patterns as well as the Patrons of it, to guard it with good Laws, and to promote it by all good Means.

It is a great Happiness to a Country, to be govern'd by Princes free from all taint of Idolatry and Superstition ; for such being educated in the true Worship of God, will take care both by their Example and Authority to countenance and establish it : their Rewards and Encouragements will all run that way, and that will make true Religion flourish, and put Vice and Wickedness out of countenance ; which will bring down the Blessings of Heaven both upon Prince and People. And therefore 'tis an high Office of Charity to the Publick, as well as a point of Duty and Interest to our selves, to pray that Kings and Queens may be kept and confirm'd in the true Worship of God, and that no Force, Frowns, or Flatteries may ever cause them to renounce or relinquish it. To this the Litany adds,

2dly, That they may be preserv'd in Righteousness and Holiness of Life ; for without the Practice of these Vertues, the bare Profession of the true Religion will be of no avail : it matters not how well we serve God, if we are unrighteous or injurious to Men ; yea we cannot worship God aright, except Righteousness and Holiness of Life accompany our Devotion. But these Vertues do more especially adorn the Crowns of Princes, they add a Lustre to their Greatness, and strengthen the Beams of Majesty. Righteousness (*faith Solomon*) establisheth the Throne, and exalts the Honour of a Nation ; Prov. 14. 34. & 16. 12.

Now the Righteousness here recommended and pray'd for in the behalf of Princes, is chiefly meant of Justice, or doing right to all Men, by a due and impartial dispensing of

of Rewards and Punishments, which is absolutely necessary to the faithful Discharge of their high Office. This was indeed one of the main Ends of God's setting up Kings and Rulers, and intrusting them with Power and Authority over others; namely to redress Injuries, to defend Innocence, and to administer true Justice to the People. They are design'd by God to be the Protectors of Right, the Preservers of Order, the Encouragers of Honesty, and the Correctors of all Injustice and Oppression. St. Peter describes them by being the *Punishers of Evil-Doers*, and the *Protectors of them that do well*. Now because there are many things, that may warp Princes from their Duty, and occasion the perverting of Justice, we are directed to pray to God, to keep them in the ways of *Righteousness*, that they may hold the Scales of Justice even, and not swerve or err from the right ways. Above all, that God would restrain them from all Tyranny and Oppression, and make all their Officers *Peace*, and their Exactors *Righteousness*; that they may be truly stil'd, Defenders of the Faith, and the Fathers of their Country.

But to *Righteousness* here, is added *Holiness of Life*, which is likewise to be pray'd for in the behalf of *Kings and all in Authority*; and that not only for their own Safety and Happiness, because *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, but for the Benefit and good Example of others, who are apt to imitate those that are in Authority; their Actions are exemplary, and draw many after them, so that if Princes be holy, their Subjects will be either really or seemingly so: Virtue then will come into Fashion and Credit, and Vice become infamous, and lose all its Prevalence and Reputation. The very Look of a Superior will put Sin out of countenance, for a King sitting on the Throne of Judgment (saith Solomon) scattereth away all Evil with his Eyes, Prov. 20.8. His Authority hath a great stroke in suppressing of Vice, and supporting of Virtue; and his Example is the most effectual Means of compassing both. So that 'tis a matter of mighty Consequence, that Kings be righteous and holy; and therefore it much concerns us to beg of God to preserve them in Righteousness and Holiness of Life. In which Request all that wish well to Prince or People, may justly join, and say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

And now from this Discourse we may learn, in how high, and honourable a Post, God hath plac'd all Sovereign Princes; who though they are his Servants, are yet the Masters and Governors of all their Subjects, insomuch, that there are none upon Earth above them in their Dominions, and consequently all must submit to them, and none may in any Case resist or rebel against them. And therefore since Princes are Men of like Passions, and subject to the same Infirmities and Temptations with our selves, let us make intercession for them, that God would *keep and strengthen them in the true worshipping of him*; that no Subtlety or Force may ever make them desert the true Religion, or draw them into any false Ways and Measures contrary to it. If God permit them (as he sometimes does for the Sins of the People) to degenerate into Tyrants and Oppressors, let us, as the primitive Christians did, patiently suffer under them, and pray unto God to relieve us in his due time and way, and not have recourse to the forbidden methods of Resistance to help our selves; which sad Experience shews, bring greater Miseries upon us, than those we seek to redress. We enjoy many Benefits and Blessings under the worst of Princes, and many more under the best; and therefore let us pray for them all, that God would keep them in Righteousness and Holiness of Life, and make them the Instruments of our Happiness and Welfare: so shall we be safe under the shadow of their Wings, and enjoy Rest and Quietness under their Protection, who attend continually on these things. And let all good People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XIII.

1 TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that first of all Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for Kings, and all that are in Authority.

ST. Paul in these Words gives a strict charge, that first and chiefly all sorts of Prayers be made and offer'd up for all our Governours, both supreme and subordinate; that is, for Kings and Queens, and all that are put in Authority under them: for whom we are to make, as well Supplications for the averting of Evil, as Intercessions for the procuring to them all manner of Good. And because it may be ask'd what are the good things, for which we are to intercede in their behalf; the Litany here in three Paragraphs gives us some Account of them: the two first containing the spiritual good Things, and the last the temporal Blessings we are to ask for them.

In the first, we pray, that it may please God to keep and strengthen them in the true worshipping of him, in Righteousness and Holiness of Life. Of which I discours'd in my last.

In the next Paragraph, of which I am now to speak, we pray that it may please God, to rule their Hearts, in his Faith, Fear and Love; and that they may evermore have Affiance in him, and ever seek his Honour and Glory. In which the People are to join, and say, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

Now in these Words, we have three or four important Petitions to be put up in the behalf of our Princes and Governours, of which I shall speak something particularly: And,

The First is, That it may please God, to rule their Hearts in his Faith, Fear and Love. Where we pray first, that their Hearts may be rul'd and govern'd aright; and secondly, mention, how or wherein they are to be rul'd; and that is, in the Faith, the Fear, and the Love of God.

For

For the first, the Wise-man tells us, that *the King's Heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the Rivers of Water, he turneth it whithersoever he will;* Prov. 21. 1. The Hearts of Kings are indeed unsearchable to Men, as the same Wise-man tells us, *Prov. 25. 3.* And their Counsels are many times too deep for Subjects to fathom, or find out the Reason or Bottom of them; but yet they are all open and naked before God, and their most secret Designs are not hid from him: and as Men by Sluices and other means turn the Stream and Course of Waters into Meadows or Gardens, as they think fit, so the King of Kings directs the Councils of Princes, and turns all their Designs to what Ends and Purposes it best pleases him. Now since God alone presides over Princes, and can dispose and turn their Hearts as it seemeth best to his godly Wisdom; we are here taught to apply our selves to him, to dispose and govern their Hearts to the great Ends of his Glory, and the Good of his People committed to their charge. And because the Heart is the Spring of Life and Motion, and all our Thoughts, Words and Works do first and principally proceed from that; we beg of God to rule and set right the Hearts of Princes, that all the Actions that flow from them may be just and righteous: for if the Fountain be pure and clean, the Streams that issue from it will be so likewise. We read in the Book of *Kings*, that the cause of all their unjust and unrighteous Acts, is ascrib'd to this, that *their Hearts were not right with the Lord.* And particularly *Jehu*, notwithstanding his specious Zeal against Idolatry, when his worldly Ends were serv'd, became himself an Idolater; the reason whereof is said to be, because *he took no heed to walk in the Laws of the Lord his God with all his Heart,* 2 Kings 10. 31. And therefore *Solomon*, the wisest of Kings, advises to *keep the Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life,* Prov. 4. 23. The Heart is the Source of all Impieties, the Mint of Malice and Wickedness, and a Cage of all uncleanness: the Prophet *Jeremy* stiles the Heart of Man *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* Jer. 17. 9. and therefore call'd upon the *Israelites* to wash their Hearts from Wickedness, that vain Thoughts might not lodg within them: for *out of the Heart (saith our Saviour) proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, False-Witness, Blasphemies;* Mat. 15. 19. *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh, and from the Motion of the Heart the Hand acts;* so that all our

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Words and Actions issue from, and are regulated by the good or bad Inclinations of the Heart. A good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit, and a corrupt Tree bad Fruit; even so a good Man out of the good Treasure of his Heart bringeth forth good things, and a bad Man out of the evil Treasure of his Heart bringeth forth evil things. And because none but God who made and searches the Heart, can mend and govern it, we desire him to rule the Hearts of Princes, who have the Rule over others, and for the Good of Mankind to mould and fashion them according to his own Will.

But how or wherein do we desire God to rule their Hearts? Why that, as the next Words declare, is *in the Faith, Fear and Love of God.*

1st, I say, we pray God to rule their Hearts *in his Faith*; that is, in the firm and stedfast Belief of him and his Word, that they may continue sound and orthodox in the Faith, and steady in the Principles of Religion and true Devotion; that as they have happily embrac'd the Christian Faith themselves, so they would endeavour to propagate and encourage it in others; that neither they nor their Subjects may at any time fall into Atheism, Infidelity or Profaneness, but that true Religion may be so firmly rooted in their Hearts, as never to fall away or apostatize from it. The Example of Princes hath a mighty influence upon the Minds of the People, who are apt to follow them in their Garb, and to imitate them in every Fashion, but in nothing more than in their Religion and Manners, in which their Practice is more powerful than their Commands; and having the Dispensation of Rewards and Punishments, may proselyte the whole Country to their Religion: and therefore we are to pray for Constancy in the Faith in Kings and Queens, that their Subjects may persevere in it to the end.

2dly, We pray God to rule their Hearts *in his Fear*; that is, to keep up a religious Awe and Dread of him in their Minds, that as they are God's Deputies and Vicegerents in their Office, so they may live in his Fear in the discharge of it; being ever ready to please him, and always afraid to offend him: So did King David, who set God always before him, that he might never be mov'd to do evil. To this end we pray the King of Kings to keep his Viceroyes in a constant Sense of his Power and Presence, that they may still revere his Greatness, adore his Goodness, and stand in continual awe of his Justice; knowing the great Account they must

must shortly make to him, for all the Talents committed to them.

3dly, We pray to God to rule their Hearts *in his Love*; that is, in love to him, who hath invested them with his own Authority, and rais'd them above the level of other Men; as also in Love to his People, whom he hath subjected to their Rule and Governance; that all their Actions may proceed from a Principle of Love to both. Indeed, if Princes consider their high Obligations to the Almighty Sovereign of the World, who hath intrusted them with his own Power, stamp'd his own Image upon them, and made them as so many Gods upon Earth, they cannot chuse but love him, for the high Honour and Station wherein he hath plac'd them: And if they farther consider the great Obligations he hath laid upon them, to tender the Good of his People, and to do them all Right and Justice in his stead, they could not but love them for God's sake, and do them all the good Offices, which he hath requir'd and design'd for them. And that God would keep them in this Sense of Duty and Love to him, is what is here meant by *ruling their Hearts in his Love*: which is the first Petition of this Paragraph. To which the People may well say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

The Second is, That Kings and Queens *may evermore have Affiance in God*; that is, that they may put their whole Trust and Confidence in him, and have all their Expectations of Succour and Success from him. We read of Princes who trusted too much to the Arm of Flesh, relying upon the Number and Strength of their Forces, and placing all their Hopes and Affiance in them: so did *Senacherib* the great King of *Affyria*, who boasted of his great Power and Might, and defy'd the Armies of the living God. But what was the effect of it? Why, nothing but Disappointment and a Curse; for God put a Hook into his Nostrils, and Bridle upon his Lips, to correct his Arrogance, and smote in the Camp of the Affyrians in one night an hundred fourscore and five thousand, who the next morning were found all dead Corps; 2 Kings 19, 35. So that Armies, Forts and Castles, and all the Instruments of War, are but broken Reeds without God's Blessing, and serve only to wound and pierce those that lean upon them. And therefore *David*, a Man and a King after God's own heart, disclaim'd all Trust in any warlike Preparations, and plac'd all his Hopes and Affiance

fiance in God ; *I will not trust in my Bow* (saith he) *it is not my Sword that shall help me : but it is thou that savest from our Enemies, and putteth them to confusion that hate us* ; Psal. 44. 7, 8. This Lesson he learnt by Tradition from his Forefathers ; for they gat not the promis'd Land by their own Sword, neither was it their own Arm that help'd them, but it was thy right Hand, and thine Arm (saith he, ver. 3, 4) and the Light of thy Countenance, because thou hast a Favour unto them. Which things he found confirm'd to him by his own Experience, which shew'd him the Weakness of all worldly Supports without the divine Succour and Assistance : *A Horse* (saith he, Psal. 33. 15, 16.) *is but a vain thing to help a Man, neither shall he deliver any by his great Strength.* And as vain too is the Help of Man, without the Blessing and Help of God : yea, *there is no King that can be sav'd by the Multitude of an Host, neither is any mighty Man deliver'd by his great Strength.* But our Help cometh from the Lord of Hosts, who made Heaven and Earth ; and therefore we find him often declaring and praying, *In thee, O Lord, have I put my Trust, let me never be put to confusion, but save me and deliver me in thy Righteousness ; be thou my Strong-hold, whereunto I may always resort ; thou hast promis'd to help me, for thou art my House of Defence and my Castle* : Psal. 71. 1, 2, 3. with much more to the same purpose throughout the Book of Psalms. By all which it appears, that that good King put all his Trust and Affiance in God, and is a good Pattern for all Christian Princes to imitate and do the same : and there is good reason for it, for his infinite Wisdom can discover all the evil Devices and Deligns of their Enemies. His Almighty Power is able to dash all their Plots, and to bring them to nothing ; and his unspeakable Goodness makes him ever ready so to do. So that *they that know thy Name* (saith David, Psal. 9. 10.) *will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast never fail'd them that seek thee.* 'Tis you know a great Rudeness to distrust a tried Friend, and to call in question his Power and Willingness to help, who hath ever shew'd himself ready to do so. And as this is unbecoming in any, so is it much more in Princes, whom God hath taken into his more peculiar Care and Protection ; for *great Salvation giveth he unto Kings, to David his anointed, and to his Seed for evermore.* They are his menial Servants, and the Instruments of his Providence, with whom he hath intrusted the Administration of Justice, and the Government of this lower

lower World ; and will he not, think you, have a more particular Care of them, whom he hath deputed to rule in his stead, and so are worth more than ten thousand of others ? So that as all Men in general, so Princes more especially ought to put their whole Trust and Affiance in God, which is the second Petition here put up in their behalf.

The Third is, *That they may ever seek his Honour and Glory.* The Glory of God is the great End of all things ; and as he ever propounds it to himself, so ought we to make it the principal Scope and Aim of all our Actions : *Whether ye eat or drink, (saith the Apostle) or whatever ye do, do all to the Praise and Glory of God ; 1 Cor. 10. ult.*

But above all, Kings and Queens, who are the Representatives and Ministers of a Kingdom, rais'd up above others for this end, are more especially to seek and set forth his Glory ; he hath crown'd them with Glory and Honour for this very purpose, that they should advance and celebrate his Praise, and therefore they are to direct all their Actions to his Glory, and to make his Power, Justice and Goodness known unto Men.

These are the spiritual Blessings, which we here beseech God to bestow upon Princes and Governours.

The temporal Blessings are in the next Paragraph, in these words ; *That it may please thee to be their Defender and Keeper, giving them the Victory over all their Enemies.* This Petition we find the primitive Christians frequently put up even for their Heathen Emperors, that they might be safe and victorious, preserv'd from all Evil, and protected from all Danger ; which cannot be, except God take them into his Protection : and therefore we may with more reason put up the same Petitions for Christian Kings and Queens, that God would be their *Defender and Keeper*, and to that end, *give them Victory over all their Enemies.*

For the first, God is the sole Defender and Keeper of Princes, who can only be safe under the shadow of his Wings ; for both their Persons and their Power are expos'd to many and great Perils, from which nothing but the Divine Protection is sufficient to secure them. Hence David often stiles God *their Helper and Defender* ; for tho' Kings and Queens may be surrounded with Guards, fortify'd with Forces, and furnish'd with all manner of Arms and Ammunition, yet all these are but a weak Defence, and give no

strength or success without God's Assistance: *Except the Lord keep the City* (saith holy David) *the Watchman waketh but in vain*; Psal. 127. 2. The most vigilant Watchman may be surpriz'd, and sometimes even taken napping; but the Keeper of *Israel* neither slumbers nor sleeps, but is ever awake for their Security. He that gives Princes their Power, will protect and preserve them in it. So he promis'd *David*, and in him all other Kings, *Psal. 89. 20, 21, &c.* *I have found David my Servant*, saith he: so that Kings are of God's finding, they are no human Invention, devis'd or taken up by Man, no Creatures of the People, or set up by them, as some would have it, but found out and exalted by God: *I have exalted one chosen (not by, but) out of the People; with my holy Oil have I anointed him.* So that his Unction too, as well as his Function, is from God: they are anointed by him, not appointed by the People; and *with his holy Oil*, to make their Persons sacred and inviolable. And having thus, in the Person of *David*, declar'd the Rise and Original of Kings, he goes on to shew the Covenant he had made with them, or the Care he takes of them; *My Hand (saith he) shall hold him fast, and mine Arm shall strengthen him*: that is, he settles Kings in the Throne, and will secure them in it; which is what we here pray for, *that he will be their Defender and Keeper.* The following words, both in the Psalm and the Litany, relate to his giving them the Victory over all their Enemies. For there God promises, that the *Enemy* shall not be able to do him violence, the *Son of Wickedness* shall not hurt him. Where, by the *Enemy* is meant the open *Enemy*, mention'd in *Psal. 55. 12.* such as openly appear in Arms against their Prince. By the *Son of Wickedness* is meant the close and false Traitor, who secretly hatches Plots and lays Snares for them; such as sometimes attend the Person and Counsels of the Prince, and at the same time study to undermine and lay them aside. Against these we are to pray for what God here promises, *viz.* that neither the open Enemies of the Crown, nor the secret Sons of Wickedness, or Contrivers for a Commonwealth, may do God's sovereign Anointed Kings or Queens any hurt or violence; but rather that the hurt or violence they intended may be turn'd upon themselves, and light upon their own pate. So God in the next words promises, *I will smite down their Foes before their face, and plague them that hate them.* So that here is Encouragement enough to pray to God, to be the Defender and

and Keeper of our gracious King, and that he will give him the Victory over all his Enemies, both open and secret ; that no Weapon, either of Power or Policy, form'd against him may prosper, but that all his Enemies may be clothed with Shame and Disappointment, and that upon his own Head the Crown may long flourish. If then we have any Love to our King and Country, or any Regard to our own Interest and Happiness, which are all wrapt up in the Safety and Welfare of our Prince, let us upon all occasions heartily and devoutly put up these Petitions in his behalf, and let all the People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

And what we pray for the present Prince upon the Throne, we pray in the next Paragraph of the Litany for all the Branches of the Royal Family ; especially for the next Heir and Successor to the Crown, that God would bless and preserve them to that time. But of this see more in the Prayers for the King and Queen, and Royal Family, in the Morning-Service : to which I refer the Reader.



DISCOURSE XIV.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that first of all Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for Kings, and all that are in Authority.

HAVING shew'd in the foregoing Paragraphs of the Litany the Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions that are to be made for Kings and Queens, the Supreme Governours of a Country ; I proceed now, as the Apostle and Litany direct, to those that are to be made for all that are in Authority.

Now those that are in Authority under Kings and Queens, relate both to the Church and State ; there being Officers appointed to preside and govern under them in both. And I begin with those that are in Authority in the Church, who for their high Calling, and the Influence they have upon all the Affairs of a Kingdom, have been ever reckon'd next in Dignity to Kings ; as *Aaron* and the Priests were

were by God's appointment next to *Moses* in the Jewish Polity. And the same Order hath been observ'd in all Christian Churches ever since. Accordingly, our Church hath plac'd those that are in Authority in the Church next to the King and Royal Family in her publick Devotions.

Now the Prayers and Intercessions made for them, are in the next Paragraph of the Litany, in these words; *That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true Knowledg and Understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth, and shew it accordingly.* Where we may observe,

First, The several Orders of Ministers that Christ hath appointed in his Church; and they are, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

Secondly, The Petitions that are to be put up for them; and they are three: (1.) That God would illuminate them with the true Knowledg and Understanding of his holy Word. (2.) That both by their preaching and living they may rightly set it forth. And, (3.) That they may shew it accordingly. Of each of which, I must say something particularly and in order. And,

First, Of the several Orders of Ministers which Christ hath appointed in his Church, viz. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. As all form'd Societies require a Subordination of Officers to rule and govern them, without which they will be no better than a confus'd Multitude; so likewise the Church being a standing spiritual Society under Christ the Head, there is a necessity of some to preside and govern it, and others to be rul'd and directed by them, without which it will be destitute of all Order and Discipline; for a Parity of Pastors is the Parent of Confusion, and to put all upon the same level, is to build up *Babel* instead of *Jerusalem*.

And therefore we read in the Old Testament, that God Almighty appointed three Orders of Ministers in the Jewish Church, to wit, *the High-Priest, the Priest, and the Levite*; who had each of them their several Duties and Functions. The High-Priest was to go alone into the *Holy of Holies*, to make Intercession and Atonement for the Sins of the People. The Priest was to offer up Sacrifice, and to teach the People. The *Levite* was to assist in the lower Ministries.

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Accordingly in the New Testament our Saviour appointed three several Orders in the Christian Church, under three different Appellations ; for he ordain'd first *Apostles*, secondarily *Prophets*, and thirdly *Teachers*, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ ; Eph. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Where the Apostles are always reckon'd first, not so much for the Order of Time, as for the Order of Dignity and Jurisdiction : for the Apostles presided over, rul'd, and directed the seventy Disciples ; and as the Apostles died, some of the Seventy were elected, and advanc'd into their place, as *Matthias* was into the place of *Judas*, Acts 1. 26. which supposes the Apostleship to be a higher Office, attended with more Power and Authority than they had before ; or else it could be no Preferment to be elected or advanc'd to it, for 'twould be to be promoted to nothing ; which is absurd to imagine. But that the Apostles and their Successors did exercise Authority and Jurisdiction over other Presbyters, is evident from Scripture and the History of the Church, as I have elsewhere shew'd at large. Now those three Orders have continu'd in the Church ever since, by the names of *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, as they do with us to this day.

These are the Officers appointed by God himself to teach, direct, and govern his Church ; whereas some illiterate Persons in our days, without any Authority, would wrest this Power out of their hands, in which Christ hath plac'd it, seeking to invade their Office, and taking upon them to meddle in things which they neither understand nor belong to them, which cannot but beget Disorder and Disturbance in the World. And these are the Persons, for whom the Litany here teaches us to pray. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To the Petitions that we are directed to put up for them ; and they are, to illuminate their Minds in the true Knowledg of God's Word, to direct their Doctrine by the right preaching of it, and to regulate their Lives to shew it accordingly. All which are suppos'd to be imply'd in that Prayer of Moses for the Sons of *Levi*, Deut. 33. 8. *Let thy Urim and Thummim be with thy Holy One.* Where by *Urim* is signify'd *Light*, to illuminate their Minds with Knowledg ; and by *Thummim* is understood *Perfection*, to compleat and adorn them with Integrity of Life, that the

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Man of God may be perfect, thorowly furnish'd to every good Word and Work.

(1.) We here pray to God in the behalf of the Clergy, that it may please him to illuminate them with the true Knowledg and Understanding of his Word. The Word of God is in Scripture stil'd *a Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths*; 'tis said to enlighten the Eyes of the Mind, and to guide the Steps of the Body: St. Peter compares it to *a Light shining in a dark place*, because it dispels the Darkness of Error and Ignorance, and gives Light to the be-nighted World. Hence the Dispensers of this Word of God are by our Saviour stil'd, *The Light of the World*, Mat. 5. 14. which Title he gave to his Apostles and Disciples, and to all that succeed them in the Work of the Ministry, who are to scatter the bright Beams of Truth over the face of the Earth: so that what the Sun is to the World, that the Clergy are in the Firmament of the Church, the great Lights to enlighten and instruct all the Members of it. For the great Property of Light is to direct and shew the way, which is the main End and Use of it; and since the Bishops and Pastors of the Church are design'd by God to direct the People in the Paths of Righteousness, and to shew to them the way of Salvation, they are fitly stil'd the Lights of the World. But because the Ministers of Christ have no inherent Light of their own, but shine only by a borrow'd Lustre, receiving all Light from God, the Father of Lights, and from his Son, the great Light, that lighteneth every one that cometh into the World; we here pray to God to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with the Light of Divine Truths, that they may lead the People into all, and nothing but the Truth, and to make the way of Salvation plain before them: to this end, we pray God to enlighten them with true Knowledg and Understanding. There is a Knowledg that puffeth up, and leads to Pride and Vanity, to Faction and Contention; this is Knowledg or Science falsely so call'd, which makes Men only wise to do evil: but as this least becomes the Ministers of Christ, so is it not to be ask'd for or found in them. But because the Priests Lips are to preserve Knowledg, and the People are to seek the Law at their mouth; therefore we are to pray God to give them sound Knowledg, and a good Understanding in all things, that they may be able to guide the People aright, and to direct their Feet in the ways of Truth and Peace. Which things

we are to ask of God for them, who is alone able to give them. So St. James advises, *If any lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraiderth not;* James 1. 5. He is the Fountain and Father of all Light, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; and therefore our recourse must be to him for them, both for our selves and others; and more especially we are to ask these things for our spiritual Guides, whom God hath set over us for our Instruction and Salvation; that God would furnish them with Learning and Abilities sufficient for their Office; that he would bless their Studies, and sanctify their Parts for the Edification of his Church, and building up their Hearers in their most holy Faith. And,

Because the Word of God is the best Rule of Direction both for their Doctrine and Practice, we pray God to illuminate them with the true Knowledg and Understanding of *his Word.* This is sometimes stil'd, *the Word of Truth*, for its undoubted Truth and Certainty, and the infallible Direction we receive from it; sometimes, *the Word of Righteousness*, for its shewing us the right way; sometimes, *the Word of Salvation*, for shewing the way to it; *the Word of his Grace*, for his Favour in giving it; and more frequently, *the Word of Life*, for directing us in the Path that leads to Life everlasting. This Word of God is the Touch-stone of sound Doctrine, to try the Spirits, whether they be of God; the Treasury of Knowledg, to instruct the Ignorant; the Store-house of Comfort, to support the Feeble-minded; the Magazine of Truth, to convince or confound Gainsayers; the Instrument of Conversion, and the Means of confirming those that are already converted. For the attaining of which Ends, the Author to the *Hebrews* declares *the Word of God to be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the Soul and the Spirit, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart:* Heb. 4. 12.

Now the right expounding and applying of this Word of God being necessary Qualifications of the Ministers of Christ, we beseech God to illuminate them with the true Knowledg and Understanding of *his holy Word.* And that,
103. Because without this the Teachers themselves will fall into great Ignorance and Errors, and lead the People into Heresies and Divisions: *Ye err (saith our Saviour to the Sadduces) not knowing the Scriptures;* and if the Pastors err, the Sheep must needs go astray. Such as these can prove

no better than blind Guides; and if the Blind lead the Blind, they will both fall into the Ditch. To this is chiefly owing the many Sects and wild Opinions of our Age, which proceed either from the Ignorance, or Pride, or the corrupt Designs of their Leaders: so that Ignorance is so far from being the Mother of Devotion, that 'tis the Nurse of Schism, and the Parent of all Confusion; 'tis that turns the Word of Life into the Savour of Death, and makes the Holy Scripture not only a dead, but a killing Letter. And therefore we pray, that all they who are to instruct others from the Word of God, may be well instructed in it themselves, and be enlighten'd with the true Knowldg and Understanding of it. And that,

2. Because without this they will wrest the Scriptures to their own and others destruction. So St. Peter speaks of some unlearned and unstable Persons, who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. And we read of others, who did ~~καταστένειν τὸν λόγον~~, turn Hucksters of God's Word, and by feign'd Words made merchandize of the People, Chap. 2. 3. The Pharisees corrupted the Law by their Traditions, and by their false Glosses made void the Word of God, Mar. 5. And we have had false Teachers among our selves, who either thro Ignorance, or the false Byas's of a corrupt and partial Judgment, have wrested the Scriptures to the great disturbance of Church and State: I shall give you only two, among many Instances. 'Tis well known how that Saying of the Angel, Curse ye, Meroz; yea, curse bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not out to the help of the Lord against the Mighty, Judges 5. 23. was made use of as a Call to Rebellion, to alarm the People to arm and fight against a lawful and excellent King: as also, how that Saying of the Apostle, Come out from among them, and be ye separate (saith the Lord) and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, 2 Cor. 6. 17. which was a Call from Heathenism and Idolatry; hath been made a Warrant for Schism and Separation in a Christian Church. Which plainly shews, how needful it is to pray, that the Pastors and Teachers of God's Church may be illuminated with the true Knowldg and Understanding of his Word; that the Gospel of Christ may not be made of no effect by such perverse Interpretations. And this is the first thing herein mention'd to be pray'd for in their behalf. Beside which, here are two things more not to be omitted in our Prayers for them; to wit, That by their Preaching they may set forth God's

God's Word, and by their Living shew it accordingly : that is, that they may be sound and orthodox in their Doctrine, and holy and exemplary in their Lives ; of which briefly.

(2.) Therefore we beseech God, that the Ministers of Christ may set forth his Word by their Preaching and Doctrine. The Preaching of the Word is an Ordinance of God for the well-instructing and edifying his Church ; it consists in Catechizing the Younger in the Principles of Religion, which is the laying the Foundation ; and expounding the Law and Gospel to the Elder, which is the Building thereupon : 'tis the most excellent and useful Means of imparting Knowledge, of begetting Faith, and bringing Men to Salvation. *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, saith the Apostle : and then asks the question, *How shall they hear without a Preacher, and how shall they preach, except they be sent?* Rom. 10. 14, 15, 18. For which reason, Preaching hath been a way of Instruction us'd from the beginning. Noah is said to have preached to the old World, and Lot is call'd a *Preacher of Righteousness* : Moses of old time had in every City them that preach'd him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-Day ; Acts 15. 21. Solomon is stil'd the *Preacher*, and the Book of Ecclesiastes contains the Sermon he preach'd to Mankind. In the New Testament we read of our Saviour's *preaching* to his Disciples and Followers, Mat. 4. 17. and his Sermon on the Mount is extant in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters of St. Matthew, wherein he publish'd the glad Tidings of the Gospel, expounded the Law of *Moses*, and instructed his Disciples in the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. After which, he sent forth his Apostles and Disciples to *preach the Gospel to all Nations* ; to which end, he sent to them the Holy Ghost, to endow them with Gifts and Graces sufficient for the Work of the Ministry, to which he had call'd them. At his leaving the World, he commission'd his Apostles to ordain and send others upon the same Errand, and establish'd a perpetual Succession of Pastors and Teachers to the World's end. And by this means it is, that our Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are impower'd to teach and govern the Church of Christ to this day. So that Preaching is a standing Ordinance appointed by God in his Church, for the instructing and well-governing his People.

But here care must be taken both as to the Matter and Manner of their Preaching ; for there may be Failings and Miscarriages in both.

For

For the Matter of their Preaching, they are to take care that it be Sound and Orthodox, agreeable to the Rule of God's Word, by which all their Discourses must be fram'd; for if they preach another Gospel than that we have receiv'd, they are to be rejected and reckon'd accursed; Gal. 1. 8. They are to set forth the pure Word of God, not their own Dreams and Fancies; nor are they to adulterate it by any Mixtures of spiritual Phrenzy and Enthusiasm, as the Manner of Sectaries is, but to keep close to the *Form of sound Words*, and those Models of sound Doctrine and true Devotion that the Providence of God, and the Piety of the Church have left us.

Then for the Manner of their Preaching, it must be plain and practical, with Simplicity and godly Sincerity; not abusing the People with hard Words above their Understanding, nor darkning Speech without Knowldg, but accommodating themselves to the Capacities of their Hearers; avoiding all needless Disputes and Controversies, but applying themselves to those necessary Duties and wholesome Truths that tend to the saving of their Souls: in a word, they are to teach and persuade, exhort and comfort, to warn and rebuke with all Authority, and to set forth God's true and lively Word, with the best Arguments and most powerful Motives they can, that they may save themselves and those that hear them: which is the 2d thing we are to ask in their behalfe.

The third and last is, *That by their living they may shew it forth accordingly*: meaning, that they may adorn and recommend their Doctrine by a suitable and exemplary Life; which is the best, if not the only way, to render it effectual: for Examples draw stronger than Precepts, and most Men like Sheep are inclin'd to go that way, where they see their Leader to go before them; which should make the Pastors of the Church very careful of their ways, that their respective Flocks may not only hear their Voice, but follow them. To live and act contrary to what they teach and profess, will cause the World to think that they do not believe themselves, and then their Hearers will be easily brought to believe as little of it as they; which must lead to Atheism and all manner of Looseness. But to set forth their Doctrine by a good Life, and to act by their own Rules, will make the World believe, they are in earnest, and that will best persuade them to live and shew it forth accordingly. Wherefore let us pray to God to pre-

serve Soundness of Doctrine and Holiness of Life in the Ministers and Dispensers of God's Word, that others by their Example may be led into the Ways of Truth and Salvation ; and then all the People will have reason to say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Thus we see what we are to ask and intercede for in the behalf of all that are in Authority in the Church ; the next is, for those that are in Authority in the State, of which hereafter. In the mean time remember what hath been said, &c.

DISCOURSE XV.

1 TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all that are in Authority.

KINGS and Queens, who are supreme in their Dominions both in Church and State, may and ought, for the Ease of their Government and the better Discharge of their High Office, to have some Persons in Authority under them in both.

Of those that are in Authority in the Church, I discours'd the last time, shewing who they are, viz. The Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; as also what we are to ask of God for them, viz. that they may be enlighten'd with the true Knowledg of God's Word, that they may set it forth by their sound Preaching, and shew it accordingly by their holy Living.

I come now to speak of those that are in Authority in the State ; and they are of two sorts.

First, The prime Counsellors and Ministers of State, who attend the Persons and Councils of Princes, and are concern'd in making and enacting Laws for the good of the Whole. And,

Secondly, The inferiour Judges and Magistrates, who are concern'd in the executing of Laws, and preserving the Peace and good Order of the Kingdom : both which, by

reason of the Weight and Difficulty of their Affairs, and the Benefit that accrues by them to the People, ought to have a share in our publick Prayers. And,

First, The Litany teaches us to pray for the prime Counsellors and Ministers of State, who attend the Persons and Councils of Princes, and are concern'd in making and enacting of Laws: and for these we are taught to pray, in the next Paragraph, in these Words; *That it may please thee to endue the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility with Grace, Wisdom, and Understanding.* Where we must observe and treat,

I. Of the Persons, for whom our Prayers and Intercessions are made; and they are, *The Lords of the Council*, together with *all the Nobility*.

II. The Prayer or Petitions to be put up for them; and that is, *that it may please God to endue them with Grace, Wisdom, and Understanding.* Of which things particularly. And,

I. Of the Persons, for whom we are here directed to pray, and they are, for *the Lords of the Council*, and for *all the Nobility*. For the first, Kings and Princes being but Men, and so confin'd as to Place and Knowldg, cannot be every where present in their Dominions, and consequently cannot personally know what is done in the several parts of them; and therefore must commission others in their stead to hear the Complaints, and redress the Injuries of their Subjects: and because many great and important matters, relating to the Peace and Welfare of their Kingdoms, daily come before them, they are wont to chuse some of the best and wisest of their Subjects, and those of the first Rank and Quality, to attend their Persons, and to deliberate and advise about their more weighty Affairs; which things being sometimes too secret and intricate, to be presently resolv'd on, or communicated, they have their Privy Councils, and their Cabinet Councils, the more maturely to consider and debate about them. And these are commonly stil'd, *The Lords of the Council*, who both need and deserve our Prayers.

But because in the multitude of Counsellors, there is Safety, Prov. 11. 14. and the more publick Affairs of a Kingdom require sometimes a more full and general Council;

there-

therefore the Prince upon such Occasions calls the great Assembly of Parliament, consisting of Persons elected by the People, and summon'd by the Authority of the Prince from all Parts of the Nation, to consult about the great Matters of the Realm, to provide for good Laws and to settle all things upon the best Foundations: these likewise may be truly stil'd, the King's or Queen's Counsellors, and ought not to be forgotten in our Prayers. But,

Besides these, we are here directed to extend our Prayers to *all the Nobility*, who by the Height of their Honour, and the Eminence of their Station, are commonly look'd upon and plac'd next to the Regal and Sacerdotal Dignity. They are like Stars of the first Magnitude, that move in a higher Sphere, and shine with a brighter Lustre than others; their noble Birth and Blood put them in the first Rank of Subjects, and give them a greater Figure than other Men. They are like *a City on an Hill, that cannot be hid*; they draw the Eyes of the World upon them, and command Respect and Veneration from them. Their Actions are visible and exemplary, they run into Precedent, and so they may become Instruments of much Good or Evil unto Mankind. And therefore by reason of the Dignity of their Persons, and the Influence of their Examples, they ought to be remembred in our publick Devotions. And these are the Persons here mention'd to be pray'd for, *viz. The Lords of the Council and all the Nobility.*

II. But what are the Prayers or Petitions, that we are to offer up for them? Why, they are, *that it may please God to endue them with Grace, Wisdom, and Understanding.* Now tho' these Words are sometimes promiscuously us'd to signify the same thing; Grace being put to signify Wisdom, and Wisdom Grace, and Understanding the same with both, as might be shew'd in many Instances; yet here they have different Notions, and imply three different things, as will appear in the handling of them. And,

1st, We pray that the King's Counsellors and Nobles may be *endu'd with Grace.* Now Grace is taken in several senses in Holy Scripture, in all or most of which it may be here truly apply'd.

Sometimes Grace is taken for Favour and Good-liking with God or Men; so *Noah is said to find Grace in the eyes of the Lord, Gen. 6. 8.* And elsewhere, *Thy Servant hath found Grace, i.e. Favour in thy sight, by magnifying thy Mercy*

ty shew'd to him, Chap. 19. 10. In this sense, to pray for Grace to the foremention'd Persons, is to beg of God to receive them into his Favour, and to shew Mercy and Kindness unto them; which is a proper Petition.

Again, Grace is sometimes taken for the Gifts of God's Holy Spirit: so it is in that Advice of the Apostle, *But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. And *Grace and Truth*, which are the Gifts of the Spirit, are said to come by *Jesus Christ*, John 1. 16. In this sense, our Prayer for those Persons is, that God would endow them with spiritual, as well as temporal Gifts, and furnish them with such Abilities of Mind, as may fit them for Counsel, and adorn their Nobility: For Ignorance and the Want of Parts, and the Improvement of them, are great Blemishes in Great Men; they mightily disparage their Dignity, and unavoidably sink the Honour of their Station. And therefore we pray, that they may have Gifts to know, and Graces to counsel and act aright; that they may do nothing that is base and dishonourable, which must necessarily lessen and diminish their Nobility.

Moreover, Grace is sometimes and mostly taken for those Supernatural Aids and Assurances of God's Holy Spirit, that are wont to be added to our natural and acquir'd Abilities, without which we shall be still defective in our Duty, and bring nothing to good effect; for the best Studies and the best Counsels will turn to no account without God's Help and Blessing. In this sense the Apostle tells us, that *his Grace is sufficient for us*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. meaning, that we who are not sufficient of our selves to think or do any thing aright, are by his Divine Aid enabled to do what is acceptable and well-pleasing to him. *I can do all things* (saith St. Paul) *thro Christ that strengthens me*, Phil. 4. 13. *Our Sufficiency is of God, and his Strength is made perfect in our Weakness*; 2 Cor. 3. 5. Now these Supernatural Aids of the Holy Spirit are what we here ask for those in Authority, who are call'd to and concern'd in the Counsels of Princes; that God would bless and assist their Endeavours, and bring them to the desir'd Issue: for the highest and best of Men stand in continual need of God's Blessing, and no Counsels, how well soever projected, can prosper or succeed, where he is excluded the Council-Table.

In fine, the Graces with which we pray God to endue the prime Ministers of State, and all the Nobility, are the Divine Graces of the Holy Spirit; such as Faith, Hope, Charity,

Charity, Fortitude, Humility, and the like; all which are necessary to compleat the Counsellor, as well as the Christian.

Accordingly therefore we pray for them, that they may have a sound stedfast Faith in Christ Jesus, holding fast the Profession of it without wavering.

That they may have firm and well-grounded Hopes of another and better Life, which may serve as an Anchor to the Soul, sure and stedfast, to keep them from making shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience.

That they may have fervent Charity to their Brethren and Fellow Subjects, being ever willing and ready to do them all good Offices.

That they may have Fortitude to go through all the Difficulties of their Duty with Courage and Resolution, not shrinking from any part of it, for fear of the Face or Frowns of any.

That they may be cloth'd with Humility, not minding too much high things, but condescending to Men of low Estate.

These and the like Christian Virtues will give strength and stability to their Counsel, which the contrary Vices will blast and undermine; they will add a Lustre to Nobility, which without them is but a mere Shadow, and all Titles of Honour no better than an empty Name. In short,

'Tis better to be good than great; but where they both meet, there they double the Beams of Honour, and render both their Persons and their Greatness the more illustrious. They then become Instruments of much Good both to Prince and People, and prove not only good Patriots, but the very Props and Pillars of their Country. And this is the first thing we here ask for great Men, that they may be endued with Grace, to these ends.

The second is, that it may please God to endue the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility, with Wisdom. Where by Wisdom is not meant, that worldly Wisdom, that consists in Craft and Subtlety, and in all the Arts of over-reaching or going beyond another, which are too much studied and practis'd in our days; for this Wisdom (as St. James tells us) descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; James 3. 15. This cometh not down from the Father of Lights, but from the Father of Lyes, and the Fiends of Darkness, whither it leads at last all that practise it. The Prophet Jeremy describes these Worldly-wise ones by their being wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowldg;

Jer. 4. 22. They are cunning enough to defraud and go beyond their Brother, but know not the ways of Righteousness. Against these the Apostle cautions, 1 Thess. 4. 6. because God is not the Author, but Avenger of these things. This Wisdom we are not to ask either for our selves or others, but ther to abhor and abandon it in both, as tending to that bottomless Pit, from whence it had its Original.

But there is another and better sort of Wisdom, that consists in the Knowledg and Practice of that which is good; a Wisdom that guides our Steps aright in the Paths of Righteousness, and directs us to our whole Duty to God, our Neighbour, and our selves. *This Wisdom* (St. James tells us) *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights;* James 1. 5, 17. And he that lacks it, must ask it of him. 'Tis a Stream issuing from the Fountain of all Wisdom and Knowledg; which the same Apostle describes and recommends by its excellent Properties, Chap. 3. 17. for 'tis first pure, that is, free from the Pollution of sinful Lusts, and from all mixture of Guile or Deceit; then peaceable, studying the publick Peace of Church and State, and the private Peace of Friends and Neighbours; 'tis gentle, not refractory, or standing out against the Wisdom of Superiors, or the Rules of Decency and Order; but easy to be intreated, to what is necessary or fit to be done; 'tis full of Mercy and good Works, that is, readily inclin'd to all Acts of Kindness and Charity; without Partiality, leaning to no Party or Faction for Interest, Favour or Affection, neither justifying the Wicked, nor condemning the Righteous, but keeping still to Honesty and a good Cause; without Hypocrify, not disguising foul Actions with fair Pretences, nor doing any thing out of Vain-glory, or any corrupt Design, but doing all things in Sincerity and Singleness of Heart.

These are the Properties of that Divine Wisdom, with which we pray God to endue the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility; for this will enable them to advise soundly, and act faithfully for the publick Good of the Country and Commonwealth: this was the Wisdom commended in Solomon, of whom we read, that *all Israel saw, that the Wisdom of God was in him, to do Judgment and Justice;* 1 Kings 3. 28. Solomon ask'd this Wisdom of God, and preferr'd it before and above all other Blessings; and God was so well pleas'd with the Wisdom of his Choice, that he added all other Blessings to it: which is Encouragement enough to ask this Wisdom for all our Superiors.

Which

Which is the second thing we here ask for them.

The third and last is, that they may be *endued with Understanding*: where by Understanding, as 'tis here distinguish'd from divine Grace and Wisdom, is meant human Knowledg or political Wisdom, whereby Men are enabled to perceive what is fit and convenient to be done, considering the Time, Place, Persons, End, and other Circumstances of Action. 'Tis said of *Solomon*, that *God gave him a wise and understanding Heart*; for besides the divine and spiritual Wisdom he was endued withal, he had the Understanding of all natural and moral things, by which he was *wiser than all Men*. His Book of *Proverbs* shews his Understanding in the Principles of all natural and moral Actions, and his deep Insight into all the Methods and Maxims of human Policy; besides which, he was endu'd with the Knowledg of all natural things, for *he spake of Trees from the Cedar of Lebanon, to the Hyssop on the Wall*; *he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowls, and of creeping Things, and of Fishes*. Insomuch that there came from all People, and from all the Kings of the Earth, to hear the Wisdom of *Solomon*; 1 Kings 4. 31, 32. &c. Before him, we read of *Moses*, that he was learn'd in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in Words and in Deeds; Act. 7. 22. that is, he was well instructed in the Knowledg of all Arts and Sciences, with which *Egypt* then abounded, and was well vers'd in all the Mysteries of State, and in all the Arts of Government; by which he became an able Guide and Leader to the Children of *Israel*. To this the Apostle alludes, in saying, *If I understood all Mysteries*, 1 Cor. 13. 2. that is, not only the Mysteries of Art and Nature, but the Mysteries of Religion, the Intrigues of State, the Events of Providence, and all the Depths and Secrets of human Policy, which are great Accomplishments, wherever they are found. This Piece of Knowledg and Understanding is very useful in all Statesmen, for that will help them to judg, to counsel, and to direct aright in Matters of the greatest Moment and Importance. And in the Multitude of such Counsellors there is Safety.

Thus we see what we intercede for in the behalf of the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility; to wit, that their Counsels may be assisted by God's *Grace*, directed by divine Wisdom, and manag'd by all humble Prudence and Understanding.

Let us therefore heartily put up these Petitions in their behalf, that they may have *Grace* to advise to nothing but what is just and honest; and *Wisdom*, to advise to the best things, and what is most honourable; and *Understanding*, to make their Advice prudent, seasonable, and successful. Let us pray that they may always act and counsel for God, but never against him. Now to act and counsel for God, is to be zealous in his Cause, and for his Glory, by espousing the one and promoting the other. And both are best done by advancing the Cause of Religion, and encouraging the true Worship of God; for God is always on that side, and ever favours and adds a Blessing to such Undertakings. But if we take counsel against the Lord and against his Anointed; if we bend our Wits to the Spoiling and Undermining of his Church; he will blast all such Counsels, and bring such Devices to no effect: for there is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord; *Prov. 21. 30.*

Wherefore let us not forget to recommend our Governors unto God, but pray him to counsel our Counsellors, and to teach our Senators *Wisdom*; to give us *Judges as at the first*, and *Counsellors as at the beginning*; that he would make our Officers *Peace*, and our Exactors *Righteousness*. In short, that he would direct our prime Ministers of State in the right way, enduing the Lords of the Council with Grace, and adorning the Nobility with Wisdom and sound Understanding.

To this, our Charity to the Publick may very well engage us, for the general Good and Safety of our Country is concern'd in the Wisdom and Success of their Counsels; for if they advise aright, we are happy; if otherwise, we are miserable and undone. So that our own private Interest, which is wrapt up in that of the Publick, should move us to become humble Supplicants for them at the Throne of Grace, for we partake of the Benefits of their good Advice, and likewise share in the Calamities that proceed from their evil Counsels and Designs. And therefore let us seriously and earnestly pray for *Grace*, *Wisdom*, and *Understanding* in those that are in prime Authority under the King, and withal heartily join in that repeated Petition, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord. Amen.*

DISCOURSE XVI.

I T I M. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all that are in Authority.

THE Persons that are in Authority, are (as I before observ'd) both Ecclesiastical and Civil.

The Persons in Ecclesiastical Authority, are the *Bishops and Pastors* of the Church, who have the Oversight and Guidance of Christ's Flock; what we are to ask and intercede for them, hath been shew'd before.

Those that are in Civil Authority, are either the prime Ministers of State, as the *Lords of the Council* and all the *Nobility*, of whom I discours'd in my last; or secondly, all inferior Officers or Governors commission'd by Kings or Queens for the due Administration of Justice unto the People. And what we are to pray for these, I am now to shew from the

Next Paragraph of the Litany, in these Words; *That it may please thee to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them Grace to execute Justice, and to maintain Truth: to which the People say, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Where we may observe,

First, The Persons pray'd for; and they are the Magistrates. And,

Secondly, The Things pray'd to God for them; and they are, 1st, To bless and prosper them. 2dly, To keep and protect them. 3dly, To give them Grace to execute Justice. And, lastly, To enable them to maintain Truth: of which in their order. And,

First, The Persons here pray'd for, are the Magistrates; that is, all subordinate Officers or Governors sent by the King or Queen as supreme, for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and the Praise of them that do well; 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. That Princes may depute such under them for their better ease, and

and to bear off Part of the Burden of Government, is evident from Jethro's Advice to Moses, who counsel'd him to provide out of all the People able Men, and such as fear God, and place such over them, to be Rulers of Thousands, and Rulers of Hundreds, and Rulers of Fifties, and Rulers of Tens ; and let them judg the People at all seasons : and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring to thee ; but every small matter they shall judg : so shall it be easier for thy self, and they shall bear the Burden with thee , Exod. 18. 21, 22.

This course is observ'd with us, and all other Governments to this day ; where some Inferior Rulers or Officers are appointed under the Supreme, for the ease both of Prince and People, the better to attain the Ends of Government. Of this kind with us are,

First, Judges, commission'd by the King to hear and determine Matters of Importance in all Parts of his Dominions, and to do Right to, and repair the Wrongs of all his Subjects.

Next to these, are Justices of the Peace, who are impower'd by his Majesty to decide Matters of lesser moment, and to keep the Peace of the Country within the Places and Counties in which they live.

After them are Mayors or Magistrates of Towns and Cities, who are elected by the People, and authoriz'd by the Prince to execute the Laws, and to suppress the Vices, and redress the Injuries of the People ; and preserve Peace, and Order, and good Government within the Limits of those Cities and Corporations to which they belong.

These are the Magistrates here mention'd and meant in the Litany ; which subordinate Governours are to be submitted to and obey'd, as well as the supreme. St. Paul charges *Titus* to put the People in mind, not only to be subject to Principalities and supreme Powers, but likewise to obey Magistrates deputed by them ; Tit. 3. 1. And St. Peter wills us to submit, first to the King as supreme, and next to Governors, as those that are sent by him ; 1 Pet. 2. 14. For these too are God's Ministers, tho not so immediately as the former : all Supreme and Sovereign Princes being God's immediate Vicegerents upon Earth, receive their Power from him as it were at the first hand ; and these having Authority from God to delegate and depute others to rule under them by virtue of that Grant, the Persons so deputed receive likewise their Power from God, tho at the second hand. But still the Authority

thority is the same in both, who both receive their Commission from the same divine and original Fountain of all Power : for there is no Power but of God (saith St. Paul) the Powers that be, are ordain'd of God. That sacred Oil, that anoints the Heads of Princes, like Aaron's Ointment runs down to the Skirts of their Clothing ; to signify, that the inferiour Officers sent by them have some share in the Unction, and receive some Virtue and Authority from it. And indeed most necessary it is, that Kings and Queens, who cannot be every where, to see the Wrongs or hear the Complaints of their People, should have some subordinate Instruments, to supply their Place, to execute their Commands, and to manage the Affairs of Government. For which reason, they are compar'd to the *Lions that supported the Throne of Solomon*, 1 Kings 10. 20. these being the main Props and Strength of a Kingdom, that uphold the Crown, and support the publick Welfare.

Seeing then that these subordinate Rulers and Governors are the *Ministers of God to us for good, attending continually upon this very thing*, Rom. 13. 6. they ought to have a share in our publick Prayers. And these are the Persons or Magistrates here pray'd for, our first Particular.

The Second is, The Petitions we here put up for them : And they are,

1st, That it may please God to bless them, that is, to assist them, and to prosper them in all their lawful and pious Undertakings ; to bestow all manner of Blessings both earthly and heavenly upon them : for God is then said to bless any, when he sendeth good things to them, or removeth evil things from them, or turneth all things to their Good ; when he succeeds their Labours, prospers their Affairs, and brings all Matters to a happy Issue. Thus when the Psalmist pronoune'd those *Blessed that walk'd not in the Counsel of the Ungodly, nor stood in the way of Sinners, nor sat in the Seat of the Scornful* ; Psal. 1. 1. he after shews wherein this Blessedness consists, by comparing them to a *Tree planted by the Water-side, that bringeth forth his Fruit in due season, his Leaf also shall not wither, and look what-soever he doth, it shall prosper* ; ver. 3, 4. So that to pray God to bless the Magistrates, is to desire him to prosper their Endeavours for the Publick Good, to endow them with all those Gifts and Graces, that are necessary for the faithful Discharge of their Office, and to multiply all sorts of Blessings upon their Heads.

2dly,

adly, We pray God not only to bless, but *to keep the Magistrates*, that is, to protect and defend them from all Harm and Danger. In this sense God is said to be the *Keeper of Israel*, to watch against all that would annoy or assault them; *Psal. 121. 3, 4, 5.* He is their *Defence on the right Hand*, that no Evil may happen unto them; and being so, they cannot but be safe and happy. To *keep*, in Scripture often signifies to preserve and protect from all Enemies, ghostly and bodily; for as without God's Blessing nothing can be well done, so without God's keeping, nothing can be safe or secure: and therefore Christ pray'd to his Father in the behalf of his Followers, that he would *keep them from all Evil*, both in and from the World; *John 17. 15.* So that to pray to God to *keep the Magistrates*, is to desire him to take them under the shadow of his *Wings*, and so to guard them by his Providence and Protection, that no Evil may approach to hurt them; 'tis to ask sufficient Aid and Strength for them, to withstand the manifold Dangers and Temptations that may assault them, that they may not be foil'd or overcome by them, but may have Power and Courage enough to subdue and triumph over them. For Magistrates are many times expos'd to greater Dangers and Disasters, than other Men; their higher Station makes them the fairer Marks for Envy and Malice to shoot at, and like high Towers they are more obnoxious to the Winds and Tempests of Fortune; they have many Ill-willers, many Malecontents that labour to undermine them and seek their Ruin; in a word, they have many open and more secret Enemies, from whose Spight and Treachery nothing but the Divine Providence can be a sufficient Protection: and therefore they stand in need of our Prayers for their Preservation, that he who never slumbers nor sleeps, would be ever awake for their Security, and keep them safe from all that think or wish Evil unto them. And this we should desire for them, not only for theirs, but our own sake; for we cannot be easy, if they are disturb'd, our Safety is bound up in their Welfare; and things cannot long go well with us, if they go ill with them, for they are the Parents and Guardians of their Country, by whose Care and Vigilance it is, that we lie down and rest in Safety.

And therefore common Gratitude should teach us to pray God to keep them, whom he hath made our Keepers and Preservers. To them we are indebted for all the com-

mon Benefits of human Life ; they take great care of us, and undergo much trouble for us ; 'tis under their Shadow that we enjoy great Quietness, and reap the Fruits of our own Labours : which we ought to acknowledg with all Thankfulness, and to pray to God for his Blessing and Protection on those who are the Instruments of conveying these Blessings unto us.

To this we have abundant Encouragement, from God's Promise to hear such Prayers ; *Call upon me (faith he) in the time of Trouble, and I will hear you* : not for your selves only, but for all for whom you are concern'd to pray ; especially for Magistrates and Gouvernours, whom God hath made his Vicegerents, the Ministers of his Kingdom, and the Dispensers of his Favours unto Mankind. For these he hath a more especial Regard, and takes a more particular Care, for the Relation they bear to him, and the Employment they have under him. And therefore Prayers made for the Safety of such as he hath made his own Favourites and Representatives, must be acceptable to him, and will find a gracious Answer.

3dly, Another thing we here pray for in the behalf of Magistrates, is, that *God would give them Grace to execute Justice*. This is one great part of the Magistrate's Duty, which cannot be done without God's Grace, and is therefore here ask'd and implor'd for them.

That executing Judgment and Justice is a main Part and Business of the Magistrate's Office, is evident both from Scripture and Reason. The Holy Scriptures abound with Precepts to Justice and Equity, with Threatnings against all Oppression and Injustice, and with Examples of God's favouring the one, and shewing vengeance on the other : *He hath shew'd thee, O Man, what is good, and what the Lord thy God requireth of thee* (saith the Prophet Micah) namely, *to do justly, to shew mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*; Mic. 6. 8. The great Judge of the World, who doth all Men right, and nothing but what is just and equal, Gen. i8. 25. hath commanded all his Substitutes and Vicegerents to imitate his impartial Justice, and to administer true Judgment to his People. He commanded Moses, the Leader and Gouvernor of Israel, *not to favour an unrighteous Witness, nor to follow a multitude to do evil, nor to speak in a Cause to pervert Judgment, nor to countenance a poor Man*, Exod. 23. 1, 2, 3. any farther than the Justice of the Cause led him. He would not have him corrupt Justice by Bribes,

Bribes, nor favour a Rich Man for his Wealth, nor yet countenance or despise a poor Man for his Poverty; but to act in all things as Truth and Equity requir'd. 'Tis said of David, that he executed Judgment and Justice to all his People, 2 Sam. 8. 14, 15. and God rewarded him for it, by preserving him whithersoever he went, Psal. 106. 30. Phineas stood up and executed Judgment, and God was so well pleas'd with it, that he stopt the Plague that then raged among them. Holy Job, who was a great Man and a Magistrate in his Country, put on Righteousness as a Garment, and Judgment as a Robe and a Diadem, Job 29. 14, 15, 16, 17. which prov'd a Crown and Ornament to him: *He was Eyes to the Blind*, that could not see into their own Cause; and *Feet to the Lame*, that could not go on and act in their own matters: *He was a Father to the Poor*, to keep them from Oppression; the Cause that he knew not, he examin'd and search'd out, and by that means he brake the Jaws of the Wicked, that would devour their Neighbours, and plucked the Spoil out of his Teeth. All which are the Properties and Character of a good Magistrate.

The Prophet *Isaiah* brings in God Almighty declaring that all the Miseries and Calamities that befel the Jews, were for want of executing Judgment and Justice in the Land; *Isa. 1. 10*—18. telling them, that without that all their Prayers, and Sacrifices, and solemn Assemblies, were but a Burden and Abomination to him; willing them to seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, and plead for the Widow: and then tho' their Sins were as Scarlet, they should be white as Snow; and tho' they were red as Crimson, they should be as Wool. To the same purpose he speaks concerning their Fasting and Humiliations, *Chap. 58. 6.* that they were of no avail, without loosing the Bands of Wickedness, undoing heavy Burdens, and letting the Oppressed go free. God Almighty made a fair Offer to Jerusalem by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, saying, Run to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see and know if ye can find a Man that executeth Judgment and seeketh the Truth, and I will pardon it; *Jer. 5. 1.* Where he makes the Magistrate's doing Justice, the Condition of his shewing Mercy.

In the New Testament St. Paul declares, that the Magistrate is not to bear the Sword in vain, but to be the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil; *Rom. 13. 4.* And St. Peter tells us, that he is appointed of God for this very purpose, to be a Terror and Punisher

Punisher of Evil-doers, and a Praise and Defence to them that do well; 1 Pet. 2. 14. By all which it appears, that the executing of Justice is a main part of the Magistrate's Office, which consists in the equal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, according to the Merits of Persons and Causes.

Now this cannot be done, without the Grace of God to direct and fortify him; for it requires Wisdom and Prudence to find out what is just, and Patience and Uprightness to hear and judge of Matters, so as to do all Men right. Moreover, Courage and Resolution is necessary to the doing justice upon some great Offenders, whom yet a good Magistrate must not fear in the Execution of his Office. He is to endeavour to please God, and satisfy his own Conscience, and then not to care whom else he displeases in doing his Duty. And this Grace of Understanding and Courage to execute Justice, we here pray God to give them.

But there is another great Part and Duty of a good Magistrate yet behind; and that is, *to maintain Truth*; to execute Justice, and to maintain Truth: where by *Truth* we are to understand the true Religion, or the true Worship of God, in opposition to all idolatrous and false Ways of Worship. To *maintain this Truth*, is to establish and defend it, to preserve it pure from the Corruption of Error or false Doctrine, and to watch against undermining it by Heresies and Schisms, and the Arts of false Teachers. We find the good Kings of *Israel* took this care of the Church, and of establishing and preserving the true Worship of God in it. The good King *Hezekiah* is commended for destroying the Monuments of Idolatry, and settling the Service of the Temple in good order for his time; which things so pleas'd the Lord, that he was with him, and *prosper'd him whithersoever he went*, 2 Kings 18. 4, 5, 6, 7. The like we read of the good King *Josiah* and others, whom God blessed and rewarded for the great Care and Zeal they shew'd about the Temple and Divine Service. And 'tis a thing well becoming Kings and Magistrates to promote the Honour of God, from whom they have their Commission, by settling the true Religion, and securing the true Worship of their Lord and Master.

And because neither can this be done without the Grace of God, for God was said to *put it into the Heart of David*, to build him an House, and he is said to have *stirred*

up others to be zealous for his Truth ; therefore we here pray that God would give our *Magistrates Grace*, not only to execute Justice, but to maintain Truth ; that he would put it into their Hearts to establish and encourage true Religion, and stir them up to guard the true Worship of God from the wild Freaks of Popery and Fanaticism.

But I find another good sense put upon these words of maintaining Truth ; and that is, the providing a liberal Maintenance for those that are the Dispensers of Truth, and attend the Offices of Religion and the Service of God. This God Almighty himself took particular care of, in the Jewish Church, by giving a larger share of the Land of Canaan to the Tribe of *Levi*, than to any of the other Tribes, to preserve the Honour and Influence they ought to have upon all the rest : and this the Piety of good Men in all succeeding Ages hath taken care of, for the good of the Church, and the maintenance of true Religion and Virtue ; which continues in many wise and religious Nations to this day. And so it did with us, till of late some rapacious and sacrilegious Reformers invaded the Revenues of the Church, to the great decay of Virtue and Religion ever since ; for by that means they have brought Poverty and Contempt upon the Dispensers of holy Mysteries, and so brought Contempt upon Religion and Sacred Things, together with them. So that this Petition for the Magistrates maintaining Truth, may be fitly understood of their securing the Rights and Revenues of the Church, upon which the Honour and Safety of Religion depends, and their punishing all sacrilegious Attempts that tend to its Overthrow.

In short then, Justice and Truth, which we here pray for in Magistrates, are the two great Props and Pillars of a Kingdom ; they establish the Throne, and exalt a Nation, by advancing the Honour, Wealth, and Strength of both. Whereas the contrary Vices of Injustice and Falshood are a Reproach to any People, by bringing Shame, Poverty, and Weakness upon a whole Country.

Wherefore let us heartily put up these Petitions, that God would bless and keep the Magistrates, both supreme and subordinate, and give his Grace to all that are in Places of Trust and Authority, to execute Justice and maintain Truth ; that is, faithfully to dispense Rewards and Punishments, and to espouse the Cause of Religion ; that Judgment may run down as a River, and Righteousness as a mighty flowing Stream ; which will make both Church and

and State to flourish in our days, to the great Honour and Comfort of the Magistrates themselves, to the Joy and Rejoicing of all good Subjects, and to the Peace and Happiness of the whole Nation: And let all that wish the Welfare of each, say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord;* to whom be Glory both now and evermore. *Amen.*



DISCOURSE XVII.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.

HAVING pray'd for Kings as supreme, and for all subordinate Magistrates that are in Authority under them; and having put up Petitions suitable to the Dignity and Station wherein God hath set them: I proceed, as the next Paragraph of the Litany directs, to the Prayer for all People subjected to them, and committed to their charge; which is contain'd in these words, *viz.* *That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy People.*

This Petition often occurs in the Book of Psalms, from whence it was taken, and inserted in our Litany, and is found in many antient Liturgies of the Church: in some it is, *Remember all thy People;* in others, *Have mercy upon all Men;* and here it is, *Bless and keep all thy People.* Where we are to consider,

First, The Persons pray'd for; and they are, *all God's People.*

Secondly, The Prayer made for them; and that is, *to bless and keep them.*

Thirdly, The End or Benefit of such Prayers; and that is, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.* Which things are to be the Subject of our ensuing Discourse. And,

First, Of the Persons here pray'd for ; and they are, *all God's People : Bless and keep all thy People.* All Men are God's People by right of Creation, he being the *God and Father of all*, and they his Offspring, or the Work of his Hands. He is the Potter, and they are the Clay, which he hath made and form'd ; Rom. 9. 21, and that in such a curious and admirable a manner, as made the Psalmist say, Psal. 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, being wrought as it were with a Needle ; weav'd with Sinews, and embroider'd with Veins.* God stamp'd his Image upon Man, as the Masterpiece of the Creation ; and being his principal Workmanship, made him Governour over all the Works of his Hand. In this sense all Men are God's People ; *It is he that hath made us, and not we our selves,* saith the Psalmist, Psal. 100. 3. and therefore we are *his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture.*

But beside the general Right of Creation, some are more peculiarly God's People by a Right of Adoption ; whereby they are adopted into his Family, receiv'd into his Church, and admitted to the Privileges of Sons and Children : by virtue hereof, God becomes in a more particular manner *their God, and they his peculiar People.* This Privilege belong'd first to the Jews only, with whom God enter'd into this Covenant ; for to them appertain'd the Adoption, the Covenants, the giving of the Law and the Promises ; Rom. 9. 4. but hath been lince enlarg'd by Christ to the Gentiles, by means whereof we also have receiv'd the Adoption of Sons. So that God hath renew'd and ratify'd this Covenant with us, by which he is in a more especial manner become our God, and we his peculiar People in Covenant with him ; so that Christians now, as well as the Jews of old, are taken into this Relation, and are made God's peculiar People. And these are principally the Persons or People for whom we are here taught to pray ; for tho' we are to do this good Office for all Men, to whom we are ally'd by a Likeness or Sameness of Nature, being *Bone of our Bone and Flesh of our Flesh*, yet are we more especially to do it for the Household of Faith, Gal. 6. 10. to which we are ally'd by the Tyes of a more spiritual Relation. For which reason, the antient Litanies extended it to all Christian People all the World over ; for the whole Church of Christ being but one Body, of which we are all Members, we are so far to tender the Good of the Whole, as to pray for the Welfare

fare of every Part. And this is enough to shew us, who are here meant by God's People, for whom we stand oblig'd to pray.

But what are the Prayers and Intercessions we are to make for them? Why, that the Litany here makes to consist of two Petitions.

1st, That it may please God to bless them with all manner of Good: And, 2dly, to keep them from all manner of Evil. Both which serve to compleat and make up all earthly Felicity. And,

1st, We here beseech God to bless all his People, by bestowing upon them all manner of Good: that is, to bless them in their Bodies with Health and Safety; in their Souls, with Peace and Tranquillity; in their Estates, with Plenty and Prosperity; in their Names, with Honour and good Report. These are the chiefest of earthly good Things, that we can desire either for our selves or others. And these we may be the more embolden'd to ask, from God's Promise of heaping all these Blessings upon the People that serve him: Blessed (saith he, Deut. 28, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, &c.) shall thou be in the City, and blessed in the Field; blessed shall be the Fruit of thy Body, and the Fruit of thy Ground, and the Fruit of thy Cattle, the Increase of thy Kine, and the Flocks of thy Sheep: Blessed shall be thy Basket, and thy Store: Blessed shall thou be when thou comest in, and when thou goest out. The Lord shall command the Blessing upon thee in thy Storhouse, and in all that thou settest thy Hand unto, &c. So God blessed his Servant Abraham by multiplying all these Blessings upon him, Gen. 24. 35, 36. and so he hath promised to bless all his People; The Lord shall give Strength unto his People (saith David, Psal. 29. 10.) the Lord shall give his People the Blessing of Peace: which comprehends in it all other Blessings. And elsewhere, As for those that work Wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the Evil-doers, but Peace shall be upon Israel; Psal. 125. 5.

But beside these worldly good Things, we pray God to bless his People with more spiritual and heavenly Blessings; such as the Blessedness of the next World, with the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory, that lead to it: for these St. Paul blesses God in the behalf of the Ephesians, who had blessed them with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1. 3. In his Epistle to Timothy, he exhorts to the Practice of Godliness, it being profitable unto all things, having the Promise of the Life that now

is, and that which is to come; 1 Tim. 4. 8. So that we are to beg of God to bless all his People with Piety, and that will bless them with Prosperity both here and hereafter. Which is the first and great thing we here pray for in their behalf.

The second is, that it may please God, not only to *bless them with all Good,* but to *keep them from all Evil:* which things will naturally follow upon one another; for where a Man is posses'd of all Good, there will be no room for any Evil. And as we cannot of our selves deserve or obtain any Good, so neither can we avert or keep off any Evil; and therefore our recourse must be unto God for both, in the behalf of our selves and others. And as the good Things we ask for God's People are both temporal and spiritual, so the Evils we pray God to keep them from are of both kinds, and are for the most part the reverse and contrary to them. Thus we desire him to keep them in their Bodies from Sicknesses and Diseases; in their Minds, from Anxiety and Trouble; in their Goods, from Rapine, Deceit, and Oppression; in their Names, from Infamy and Reproach. These are some of the sorest Evils that can betide any here in this World; from which therefore we beseech God to keep all his People.

And this likewise we are encourag'd to do, from many gracious Promises made to us to that purpose. The Psalmist hath recorded many of them, and seal'd to the Truth of them by his own Experience. The ninety first Psalm is full of Promises of God's defending and keeping his People from all Evil; how to that end he takes them under the *shadow of his wings,* and *covers them with his Feathers,* that no Evil may approach to hurt them; ver. 1, 2, &c. declaring his *Truth and Faithfulness to be their Shield and Buckler.* *He shall deliver thee* (saith he) *from the Snare of the Fowler, and from the noisom Pestilence;* so that thou *shalt not be afraid for any Terror by night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by day, for the Pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the Destruction that walketh at noon-day:* because thou *hast made the Lord thy Refuge, there shall no Evil happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy Dwelling.* With much more to the same purpose; which may give us confidence enough to ask these things for all his People.

But beside these temporal Evils, there are other spiritual Evils, from which we may and ought to pray God to preserve them; as from the Evils of Sin, with all the present Miseries

Miseries that attend them in this Life, and the much greater that await them in the Life to come. And this is briefly the Prayer that our Church puts up for all God's People, viz. that they may be blest with all kinds of Good, and kept from all manner of Evil.

But what is the End and Design of these Petitions? Why that, as the next Words of our Text tell us, is that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty. In speaking to which, 'twill be requisite to shew,
1st, What is meant by leading a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.

2dly, That this is one of the greatest Blessings that can betide a People. And,

3dly, That praying for the Prince and People, is the best and surest way of obtaining it. For the

1st, What is meant by *leading a quiet and peaceable Life*, is so obvious to the meanest Understanding, as to need little or no Explication; in short, 'tis to pass our time in Rest and Quietness, and to spend our days in a calm and undisturb'd Course of Life, free from all publick Troubles and Commotions in the State, and likewise from all private Feuds and Contentions in the Place or Neighbourhood wherein we live. To lead such a Life in all Godliness, is to pass it in the due Exercises of Religion and true Devotion, and to have the free Enjoyment of God's holy Word and Sacraments, which are the best Instruments and Helps to Piety and Godliness, whereby we are enabled to discharge our Duty towards God. To lead this Life in all Honesty, is to live in a due Observance of the Rules of Right and Equity, to obey the Laws of our Country that settle Property, and allow to every one their Portion. 'Tis to rest satisfy'd with the Lot and Portion that God giveth us, or is acquir'd by our own Labour and Industry, without invading the Rights and Privileges of any; not defrauding, over-reaching, or going beyond our Brother in any matter, but doing all things honest and honourable in the sight of all Men: neither taking or with-holding from another what is his, but to be true and just in all our Dealings and Commerce with one another, and thereby discharging the Duties we owe to Men. In a word, to *lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty*, is to do what in us lies to live peaceably with all Men, to give as little disturbance as possible to any, to promote Truth and Fair-

dealing in the World, and to be Examples of Piety and Virtue to one another. From whence I proceed to shew;

2dly, That such a Course of Life, where it generally obtains, is one of the greatest Blessings that can betide a People: for this gives every one to sit quietly under his own Vine, to eat the Fruits of his own Fig-tree, and to drink the Waters of his own Cistern; which things will remove all Oppression, silence the Sound of Injustice, and cause that no Complainings be heard in our Streets: And happy are the People that are in such a case, and much more happy for having the Lord for their God. This will fill the World with easy and quiet Habitations, and make the Earth a Copy and Resemblance of Heaven. In this state of Affairs nothing can be wanting to compleat our Happiness, but Hearts to make a right use of such inestimable Benefits; and nothing can make us miserable, but a wilful Neglect or Abuse of them: for to live peaceably with all abroad, and quietly with all at home, is a state of the greatest Ease that this World can afford. To which if we add Godliness and Honesty, they will bring us to everlasting Ease and Rest in the World to come. Honesty, we say, is the best Policy, and Godliness is found to be the greatest Gain; and therefore we are above all to desire and delight in these things, as the greatest Blessings of human Life.

But how may we attain to the *leading a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty?* Why that, our Text tells us, is by making Prayers, Supplications, and Intercessions both for Prince and People. For Kings and Princes in the first place, by reason of the great Influence they have upon all human Affairs, for they are the chief Instruments that convey Happiness or Misery to whole Countries. The Enjoyment of all the Comforts of this Life depends very much upon the Favour and Authority of Princes; yea our very Lives are in a great measure owing to their Care and Preservation, who are therefore stil'd, *The Breath of our nostrils*, Lamen. 4. 20. But the Peace and Quiet of our Lives are almost wholly in their hands; if they use their Power for our Protection and Welfare, we are happy; if they use it against us, we must be, as to our worldly Estate, miserable. And,

As for Godliness and Religion, thō the inward parts of it, which consist in Faith, Repentance, and a good Conscience, be out of the reach of any earthly Powers; yet the external and publick Exercise of it, which is a very great

great Felicity, may receive sore and heavy Abridgments.

We read how it fared with the *Israelites*, under the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, what heavy Burdens they labour'd under, and how they were kept from the Service of their Maker.

The Books of the Kings inform us, how the Church flourish'd under the happy Reigns of *David*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah*, and *Josiah*, when Godliness and Honesty met together, and Righteousness and Peace kiss'd each other: And how sorely it suffer'd under the bad Reigns of *Jeroboam*, *Manasseh*, *Zedekiah*, and the like; when Virtue and Honesty decay'd, and Vice and Iniquity got into the Throne: as also what Hardships they endur'd during their Captivity in *Babylon*.

If we go forward to the times of the Gospel, we find how the Church of Christ groan'd under many of the *Roman Emperors*: And tho' the primitive Christians preserv'd their Religion under *Nero*, *Dioctesian*, and the rest of that bloody strain; yet were they debarr'd of all publick and solemn Worship of God, and were forc'd to take up with some secret and solitary Addresses to him.

But when the Empire became Christian, and *Constantine* espous'd the Cause of the Church, then did it soon get out of that black Cloud of Persecution, and flourish'd under the Sunshine of Peace and Prosperity; for then publick Places were every where erected and consecrated for the Worship of God, and the Honour of our Blessed Saviour. And thanks be to God, the Church hath in some measure enjoy'd the same ever since. By which it appears, what a mighty Influence the Power and Interest of Princes have upon all human Affairs, and how much the Peace and Prosperity of Church and State depend upon the Countenance and Protection of Magistrates.

And therefore both the Apostle in the Text, and our Church in the Litany direct to the praying to God for them, as the best means of procuring Blessings for them and all the People: I might say, the only means, and truly too; for God Almighty, who is the great Disposer of these Blessings, hath prescrib'd us no other way in the want of them, but to make our Requests known unto him. He allows no recourse to Arms, nor betaking our selves to any Methods of Violence to wrest them from him; no, *Against a King* (saith *Solomon*) *there is no rising up*, Prov. 30. 31, and they that do so, *shall receive to themselves Damnation*, Rom. 13. 2. We are but Subjects, and have no Authority to controul Princes, or to say unto them, *What dost thou?* Eccles. 8. 4.

Our only Application must be to him, who is King of Kings, and higher than all the Potentates of the Earth; who is ever ready to hear the Prayers, and answer the reasonable Desires of his People.

And as this is the best way, so is it the surest and most effectual course, to lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty; for God Almighty presides in and overrules all the Counsels of Princes, and makes them either a Blessing or a Scourge, as best suits with his own Glory and our Good. If we constantly own our Dependence upon him, and with pious and thankful Hearts make our frequent Addresses to him, he can and will incline them to favour us: But if we look no farther than the Instruments of his Providence, without having recourse to him, as the Fountain and Spring-head of all our Mercies, we shall soon find the Current of his Favour stopt, and so shall be justly left to rely upon *broken Cisterns that can hold no Water*. For it is, and always hath been the settled Method of Divine Providence, never to bestow any signal Mercies, without the Concurrence of our own Duty to obtain them. And consequently, as God hath set up Governours to convey Peace, Justice, and Happiness to his People; so doth he expect that we apply our selves to him by Prayer for a Blessing on the Ministers of his Kingdom, for the accomplishing of those good Ends.

This is the condition to be perform'd on our part, for *I will be sought unto* (saith God) *for these things*: and sure they come easy enough, if they may be had for asking, without which we forfeit his Favour, and justly go without them.

Wherefore if we love our King, Church, or Country, let us pray God to bless all his People, and especially our Governours who convey Blessings to all the rest. Let us live in all Godliness and Honesty, that we may live in Peace with God and Man; so shall we lead easy and quiet Lives here, and be sure to attain everlasting Peace at the last: and to these Requests let all the People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XVIII.

I Tim. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.
I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men, &c.

I Have in the foregoing Paragraphs of the Litany shew'd, what Prayers and Intercessions are to be made for Kings and Queens, as supreme, and for all subordinate Rulers commission'd by them, as also for all the People committed to their Care and Government.

I proceed now, as the next Paragraph leads me, to shew, that the same Prayers and Intercessions are to be extended to all Nations, and that what we ask for the several Ranks and Orders of Men in our own Kingdom, is to be ask'd likewise for the different Degrees of Men in all other Countries: For tho' we are first and principally to regard the Country or Nation wherein we live, in whose Safety and Welfare we are most nearly concern'd; yet are we by the Ties of Nature and Religion oblig'd to implore the same Blessings for all other Nations, and not to forget to desire the Good of all Mankind in our Publick Devotions.

Accordingly our Church teaches us to intercede for them in these following words; *That it may please thee to give to all Nations, Unity, Peace and Concord. Where we have,*

First, The Parties for whom we intercede, and they are, All Nations.

Secondly, The Things we pray and intercede for in their behalf, and they are, Unity, Peace, and Concord, the three great National Blessings that best promote the publick and private Welfare: Unity relating to the Matters of the Church, Peace to the Affairs of the State, and Concord to Mens Agreement on their private Stations and Conversie with one another. All which are Matters worthy of our daily Prayers.

I begin then with the Parties for whom we here make Intercession, and that is, for all Nations; That it may please thee to give to all Nations, &c. 'Tis a sign of a narrow and contracted Spirit to confine all his Desires and good Wishes to himself only, or to his own Sect or Country. True Charity is of a more extensive nature, and so far enlarges the Heart, as to wish well to all the World, and to take in all Mankind within the Compass of his Devotion. And there is good reason for so doing; for,

1st, All Mankind are allied to each other by Affinity of Nature, having all the same Make and Faculties both of Body and Mind: yea, the Apostle tells us, that we are all tied together by one Bond of Consanguinity and Blood; for God hath made of one Blood all Nations, that dwell on the Face of the Earth, Acts 17. 26. At what distance soever plac'd, they have all the same Father in Heaven, that made and fashioned them of the same Mould, they are descended of the same earthly Parents; for Adam was the Father of them all, and Eve the Mother of all living: so that they are all *Fratres ex utroque Parente*, Brethren by the Fathers and Mothers side, having the same Parents, fram'd of the same Matter, and made for the same End: and *Why then should there be any Strife between them* (saith Abraham) since they are Brethren? Gen. 13. 8. So that all the World being a-kin, and springing from the same Blood, they ought to consult the Good of all Men, and pray for one another; and that,

2dly, Because all the Christian World are allied not only by the Ties of Nature, but by the stricter Bond of a more spiritual Fraternity, being all Members of the mystical Body of Christ, and, as St. Paul expresses it, *Members one of another*. All Christians belong to the same Family all the World over, they have all the same Lord and Saviour, being purchas'd and purified by the same Blood, animated by the same Spirit, and born to the same heavenly Inheritance; which things make the most noble and the closest Relation that can be, and should therefore breed the greatest Endearments: they should be full of Affection and Sympathy one towards another, feeling their Sufferings, and mutually pitying and praying for Fellow-Christians in all Nations and Countries whatever. The Apostles were commanded, to go and teach all Nations; which they did, not only by preaching the Gospel to them, but

but by praying for God's gracious Aid and Blessing upon them. And therefore St. Paul, in all his Epistles to the Christians in the several Parts and Places of the World, tells them, that he was ever mindful of them in his Prayers: And this Lesson our Litany here teaches us, viz. to extend our Devotion and Charity to all Mankind, and to pray for all Nations; the first thing propounded to be consider'd.

The Second is, the Subject Matter of these Prayers, or the Petitions here order'd to be put up for them; and they are, for *Unity*, *Peace*, and *Concord*: which Words, the sometimes promiscuously taken and us'd for one another, have yet here a more particular and distinct Signification. Some take them for three different sorts or branches of *Peace*; understanding *Unity*, for *Peace at home* among themselves; *Peace*, for the Agreement of Nations, or *Peace one with another*; *Concord*, for Leagues of Amity, or Freedom of Commerce or Traffick with each other. But these are rather political than spiritual Considerations; and therefore others, and perhaps more fitly, understand *Unity*, of Matters of Religion and the Church; *Peace*, of the publick Matters of the State; and *Concord*, of the private Amity and Agreement of Neighbours: in all which Senses we may heartily wish and pray God to give them to all Nations. And,

We pray God to give to all Nations *Unity* in the Matters of Religion and the Church; which is the best way to prevent all Faction, Dissension, and Rebellion in Countries; which commonly owe their Rise to Differences and Divisions in Religion. And therefore to put a stop to these great Evils and Miseries of a Kingdom or Country, we pray God that all the Members of the Catholick Church in all Nations may unite in all the great and weighty Matters of Religion; such as the Doctrine, Discipline and Communion of the Church, which are so many Bonds of Union to hold all the Members of it together. St. Paul tells us, that the whole Catholick Church, dispers'd over all the World, is but *one Body*, animated by *one holy Spirit*, having *one Faith*, summ'd up in the Apostles Creed, call'd therefore the form of sound *Doctrine*; Eph. 4. 4, 5, &c. *one Lord Jesus Christ*, the Head and Governour of his Church, who settled *one Discipline* in it; appointing *first Apostles*, then *Priests and Teachers*, for the edifying of this *Body*: *one Fellowship*

ship and Communion, to unite them together in the Bonds of Peace and Love; ver. 11, 12. Which things being order'd by Christ himself, we pray God that all Nations may preserve this Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; that they may keep the one Faith sound and entire, without falling into Errors and Heresies; that they may preserve the one Discipline, Government, and good Order of the Church, without running into Sects and Divisions; and that they may all join in one Fellowship and Communion, without rending and mangling the Body of Christ by Schisms and Separations. This happy State of the Church may be well wish'd and pray'd for in all Nations, which would be a pleasing prospect in the sight of God and Man; Behold! how good and pleasant a Thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity; Psal. 133. 1, 2, 3, 4. pleasant like the precious Ointment pour'd on the Head of Aaron, that drench'd his Beard, and ran down to the Skirts of his Clothing: meaning, that it chears the Heads, and comforts all the Parts of a Nation; yea, pleasant as the Dew of Hermon, that fell upon the Hill of Zion, and descended to refresh the lower Valleys, where God commanded his Blessing, and Life for evermore. Which Expressions signify the general and invaluable Blessings that attend Unity; and are sufficient to endear and recommend to us such a pleasing Posture of Affairs.

But because the Pride, Prejudices, Passions and Humours of too many are such, that this happy Unity is not easily attain'd by ordinary means, we therefore beseech God to give it to us and to all Nations; that *He who alone maketh Men to be of one mind in an House*, Psal. 68. 6. would so over-rule the Hearts of all People, as to incline them to this Unity and Harmony in his Worship, that *they may all with one Mind and one Mouth glorify their great Creator*. Rom. 15. 6. which is the first thing we here pray for in all Nations, viz. Unity in matters of Religion and the Service of God.

The 2d is Peace, which relates to the Affairs and good Management of the State; That it may please thee to give to all Nations Peace; that is, with one another: and that consists in the Tranquillity and Quiet of the publick State, when it is free from all foreign and civil Wars, and enjoys an undisturb'd Rest from all Tumults, Slaughters and Insurrections. And such a Peace is one of the greatest and most desirable Blessings that can betide a Nation, because it includes in it all other Blessings, and gives the taste and relish

relish to all our Enjoyments. What Health is to the Natural Body, that is Peace to the Body Politick of States and Kingdoms : their Life, Breath and all things, their Safety, Wealth and Prosperity are all wrapt in it, and depend upon it: which made good *Hezekiah* ask the question, *Is it not good if Peace and Truth be in my days?* 2 Kings 20. 19. Good is commonly divided into *Bonum Utile, Fucundum, & Honestum*; that is, into what is profitable, pleasant, and honourable: in all which Senses, Peace may be truly stil'd good to all Nations, because it brings Profit, and Pleasure, and Honour to the Inhabitants thereof. For,

(1.) Peace brings Profit by opening the way to Trade and Commerce with all Nations, whereby one Country supplies what is wanting in another. There is a mutual Need and Dependence of Nations upon one another, that there may be a mutual Intercourse and Commerce between them. Now 'tis Peace that settles this Correspondence, and promotes the Trade of the World, for that keeps the Seas and the Ports open and safe, and thereby conveys the Riches and Commodities of other Places, which scatters Wealth and Plenty over all the Land. Whereas War obstructs those Passages, makes the Seas unnavigable, and causes Nations to turn Pirates to one another; which brings Poverty and Distress upon all. Moreover, Peace improves and encourages Husbandry, it enables to mend and enrich the Soil, and so causes it to bring forth its Fruits in due season; it makes the Husbandman to plow in hope, and to sow in hope of reaping the Fruits of his Labour: whereas War destroys and depopulates a Country, it spoils the Growth, and consumes the Product of it, and so frustrates all Expectations. Again, Peace preserves Property, and defends Right, and so promotes the Profit and Prosperity of all Nations: in calm and quiet times Laws have their full Force and Authority, they can allot to every one their Portion, and secure it to them; Justice then can dispense Rewards and Punishments according to the Merits of Persons and Causes; it can protect the meanest Subject, and punish the highest Offenders. But *inter Arma silent Leges*, the Alarms of War drown the Voice of the Laws, nor can the Sound of Justice be heard amidst Drums and Trumpets. The longest Sword then rules all, and arm'd Violence carries all before it. Plunder and Rapine then abound every where, and Right and Honesty are turn'd out of doors. But in times of Peace the Laws prevail, and are strong enough

enough to keep all things in due Order. Justice then can strike boldly, and none are too great for Punishment. In all these and many more respects, Peace conduces much to the profit and advantage of all Kingdoms and Countries; and so 'tis *Bonum Utile*. And as Peace is thus profitable to all Nations, so is it,

(2.) No less pleasant likewise; 'tis *Bonum Iucundum*: *Be bold how good and pleasant a thing it is!* saith the Psalmist. Peace puts Gladness into all good Mens Hearts, and Chearfulness into their Countenances; it chears and revives their Spirits, and adds much to the Comfort and Happiness of their Lives. Their Housies then are free from Fear; *They take the Timbrel and Harp* (saith holy Job) *and rejoice at the Sound of the Organ*, Job 21. 12. In short, they spend their Days in Prosperity, and their Years in Pleasure.

Lastly, Peace is *Bonum Honestum*; that is, 'tis honourable, vertuous, and religious: it gives Leisure and Encouragement to Learning, and improves all Arts and Sciences; which is an Honour and Credit to any Country. But above all, it promotes Piety and Religion, and helps forward the Salvation of Mens Souls; for it gives leisure to Devotion, and encourages the publick Exercises of it; it tends to the general Propagation of Christianity, and to the Conversion of the whole World. In fine, Virtue and Religion often flourish in times of Peace, but very much abate and decay in times of War; of which we have had sad experience both in Civil and Foreign Wars.

Peace then being so great a Blessing, we may very well, as we are here directed, pray to God to give unto all Nations Peace. 'Tis God only that can give it, for *I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace*; (saith he) *Peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near*; Isa. 57. 19. He is the great Peacemaker of the World, that must incline Mens Hearts to seek and embrace Peace, before it can be concluded. So the Psalmist tells us: *He it is that maketh Wars to cease in all the World, he breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in funder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*; Psal. 46. 9. And therefore to him must our recourse be for it; for which we have abundant Encouragement from God's Promises to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, of giving them Peace in their days: which Promises the Psalmist enlarges to all God's People, saying, *He will give Strength unto his People, he will give his People the Blessing of Peace*; Psal. 29. 10. The Prophet Isaiah hath a particular Promise

or Prophecy of Peace, relating to the latter days, or the days of the Gospel, in these Words : *He shall judge among the Nations, and shall rebuke many People, and they shall beat their Swords into Blow-spoons, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks ; Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more ; Isa. 2. 4.* From which Promise our Church here teaches us to apply unto God for the fulfilling of it, by giving unto all Nations Unity in Matters of Faith, and Peace in Matters of State ; the second thing here pray'd for.

The 3d and last is, Concord ; that it may please thee to give to all Nations, Unity, Peace, and Concord : where Concord, as tis distinguish'd from the two former, signifies the Amity and good Agreement of Subjects of the same Kingdom, whereby they live in Love and Kindness to one another. *What Concord hath Christ with Belial ?* (saith the Apostle) or *what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols ?* 1 Cor. 6. 15, 16. that is, none at all ; there is no Harmony or Correspondence at all between them, their ways being quite different and opposite one to the other. So that Concord is to walk in the same way, to go hand in hand together, and to join in Heart and Affection. This was found in the primitive Christians, who are said to be of one Heart and one Soul, and to agree together in the same Mind and the same Judgment. And this is what the Apostles frequently exhort to in all their Epistles, as the best means to preserve that Amity and Affection that is requir'd among all Christians. This will help them to love as Brethren, to live as Neighbours, and to be ready to perform all good Offices one to the other ; to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, and to bear a part in all the Comforts and Afflictions of each other.

Such a Concord of Heart and Affection is earnestly to be wish'd and labour'd for, tho by reason of the various Humours, Interests, and Inclinations of Mankind, it be very hard and difficult to be obtain'd ; and is therefore a matter worthy of our most fervent Prayers and Addresses unto God, to give and grant it to us.

Thus we see what we are to intercede with God for in the behalf of all Nations ; to wit, to give them Unity, Peace, and Concord : That as the whole Catholick Church is but one all the World over, so all the Members of it may unite in the one Doctrine, Discipline, and Communion of it :

That

That all the Kingdoms of the Earth being the Kingdoms of God and of his Christ, they may all live in Peace with one another: and finally, That all the Subjects of each being Brethren, may preserve mutual Concord, Amity, and Agreement among themselves.

Wherefore let us heartily put up these Petitions unto him, who is the *Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord;* and to make them effectual, let us first make our Peace with God, and walk in ways well-pleasing to him: and then the Wise-man tells us, *when our ways please the Lord, he will make all Men, even our very Enemies, to be at peace with us.* Prov. 16:7. This we may learn from God Almighty's dealing with his own People the Jews. When they started aside from him, and their ways displeas'd the Lord, he stirr'd up their *Enemies round about them, and sold them into the hands of those that spoiled them:* But when they believ'd his Word, and did what was well-pleasing in his sight; he soon rais'd up Friends for them, that made their *Enemies stoop, and caused them that led them away captive to pity them.* This is the settled Method of God's Providence, which may teach us how to demean our selves towards him.

To conclude then, since Unity is the Strength of Kingdoms, and Peace the Safety and Happiness of a Nation; since Love and Concord advance the Prosperity of Subjects, and Amity and good Agreement are the Comfort and Tranquillity of Neighbours; let us implore these things for all Nations, and more especially for our own, that all the Members of it may in their several places endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and to preserve Love and Charity among themselves; so shall we make this present Life easy, and the future eternally happy: to which let all the People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XIX.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all Men, &c.

HAVING shew'd what Intercessions are to be made for all Nations in general, as also for Men of all Ranks and Degrees in particular ; I proceed, as the next words of the Litany direct, to shew what Intercessions we are to make for our own selves : For the following Paragraph teaches us to look home, and to consider and ask what is requisite and necessary for our own Salvation. Charity indeed looks abroad, and extends to all Men, as the foregoing Discourses plainly manifest ; but yet it is most nearly and principally concern'd at home, and wills us to know and seek first what is needful and wanting to our own Souls : And what that is, the next words of the Litany will tell us ; *That it may please thee to give us an Heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy Commandments.* To which the People are directed to say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Where we ask for our selves such a tender and flexible Heart, as may incline us to the Love and Fear of God, and to a diligent walking in the ways of his Commandments : which things must be the Subject of our present Discourse. And,

First, We ask for our selves a tender and flexible Heart, that it may please thee to give us an Heart ; that is, such a one as is yielding and pliable to the Motions of God's holy Spirit, *easy to be intreated* and wrought upon, to do what is fit to be done. The Heart is naturally hard and inflexible, prone to all Evil, and averse to all that is Good ; yea, hard as the Adaman or nether Mill-stone, call'd therefore in Scripture *a Heart of Stone*, Ezek. ii. 19. incapable of the Impressions of Good and Evil, deaf to all the Calls of God's holy Word and Spirit, regardless of all his Promises and Threats, and *harden'd thro the Deceitfulness of Sin*,

Heb. 3. 13. In opposition to this, we pray here for another; that is, for a soft, yielding, and relenting Heart, one that is tender and tractable, touch'd with the Sense of Sorrow for Sin, obedient to God's Call, and ready to repent; call'd in Scripture *a broken and contrite Heart*, Psal. 50. 17. *a Heart prick'd with Grief and Remorse for Sin*, Acts 2. 37. *a Heart of Flesh*, soft and easy to receive the Impressions of Divine Grace. Sometimes 'tis call'd *a new Heart, and a new Spirit*, Ezek. 36. 26. in opposition to the old, hard, and unrelenting Heart and Spirit, which nothing can bow or break. Again, 'tis stil'd a pure and a clean Heart, in opposition to that corrupt and deprav'd Heart, which was contracted by the Sin of our first Parents: *Blessed are the pure in Heart*, saith our Saviour, Mat. 5. 8. and *create in me a clean Heart* (saith holy David, Psal. 51. 10.) *and renew a right Spirit within me*: that is, a Heart and Spirit renew'd and purg'd from our original Corruption, whereby the Mind and Conscience is defiled, Tit. 1. 15. To which the Prophet Jeremy refers, saying, *Wash thine Heart from Wickedness, that thou mayst be saved; how long shall vain Thoughts lodg within thee?* Jer. 4. 14.

Now such a pure and clean Heart is what we here beg of God to give us; which we are encourag'd to ask from God's gracious Promise to bestow it, telling us, by the Prophet Ezekiel, *I will sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean; a new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh*: Ezek. 36. 25, 26.

To the obtaining of which, our own Desires and Endeavours must concur; for tho' God hath promis'd to grant it, yet he calls upon us to *make us clean Hearts, and to wash our Hearts from Wickedness*: implying, that something must be done on our parts towards it, and then God will not be wanting on his part to compleat it. We must earnestly seek and labour for it, and then he will be ever ready to bestow it: for *I will be sought unto* (saith he) *for these things*. This is the first and great thing we here ask for our selves; viz. a soft, tender, and clean Heart, or a new, pliant, and flexible Spirit: and that will dispose us for the

Second Thing here interceded for; and that is, for the Love of God: *That it may please thee to give us an Heart to love thee*. The Heart is the Spring or first Mover of all the

the Passions of the Soul, and the Rise of all good and bad Actions ; 'tis a Fountain that sendeth forth sweet Waters and bitter : *Out of the abundance of the Heart* (saith our Saviour) *the Mouth speaketh*, Mar. 12. 34, 35. and according as it is well or ill dispos'd, it uttereth good words or bad : *A good Man out of the good Treasure of his Heart bringeth forth good things, and a bad Man out of the evil Treasure of the Heart bringeth forth evil things* ; for *out of the Heart* (saith he) *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemy*: Mat. 15. 19. And therefore we must first make the Fountain pure and clean, before the Streams that issue from it can be so likewise. So the Wise-man advises, *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life*; Prov. 4. 23. And because the Love of God can only come from a sound and pure Heart, we therefore pray God to give us an Heart to love him : for the understanding whereof, I must shew,

1st, The Nature of Love : And,

2dly, The Object on which it is to be fix'd.

For the Nature of Love, it may be thus defin'd ; 'Tis a Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to unite it self to some beloved and delightful Object. Where I stile it,

(1.) *A Passion of the Soul*, to signify that 'tis seated within and springs from the Heart and Soul : 'tis not from the Tongue or the Teeth outward, for that is but Ceremony and Compliment, and is oft-times no better than Dissembling and Hypocrify. But true Love is evermore rooted in the Heart, and is attended with Sincerity and godly Simplicity, call'd in Scripture *Singleness of Heart*, which is free from all Guile and Hypocrify. To this the beloved Disciple exhorts all good Christians, saying, *Let us love not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth*; 1 Joh. 3. 18.

(2.) I stile it such a Passion of the Soul, *as inclines to Union*, and the closest Embraces. This is an essential Property of Love, which is always attended with a Desire of enjoying ; 'tis impatient of the Absence, and delighted with the Presence of the Thing beloved, and feels an inward Affection to and Complacence in it.

(3.) I stile it a Passion, that inclines the Soul to unite it self to a grateful and beloved Object ; that is, to something either really or apparently good, and so amiable, if not in it self, yet in the Opinion or Imagination of him that loveth it. This is briefly the Nature, and these are the Effects of Love. From whence

I proceed to consider the Object, on which this Passion or Affection of the Soul is to be chiefly fix'd. And that is, on God, who is the best and most lovely of all Beings; and therefore we pray here for a Heart to love him above all things: to which we have many Precepts, especially that of our Blessed Saviour, Mat. 22. 37, 38. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength; which is the first and the great Commandment.* *O love the Lord, all ye Saints,* (saith the Psalmist) *for his Name only is lovely, and his Praise above Heaven and Earth.* Indeed, the original Corruption of our Nature, and the Enmity contracted since between God and us by evil Works, have in a great measure alienated our Minds, and drawn the Stream of our Affections from him; which makes it necessary earnestly to beg of God to turn our Hearts, and to fix them in the Love of himself. And because the World with all its Pomps and Vanities, however renounc'd in Baptism, are yet too apt to inveigle and prevail too far upon us; therefore we are frequently to beseech God to shed abroad his Love into our Hearts, and so to rivet it within us, that nothing may be able to move our Minds, or steal away our Affections from him. This should be our chiefest care, so to watch and pray against all Temptations, that our Hearts may not stray from him. And there is great reason for so doing, for God is the highest and noblest Object of our Affection: he made the Heart, and calls for it, and deserves it infinitely before and beyond any other thing.

The two great Motives and Attractives of Love, are the transcendent Excellency of a Person in himself, and his unspeakable Goodness and Kindness unto others; both which are in the most superlative degrees to be found in God.

The transcendent Dignity and Excellencies of his Nature are far above all that we can express or conceive concerning him; he is the Sum and Center of all Perfections, and all the Excellencies that are scatter'd up and down, and found in any of his Creatures, are deriv'd from him.

His Goodness likewise is infinite and unexpressible; for his Mercy is over all his Works, who all receive their Being from his Power and Wisdom, and have all their Dependence and Subsistence upon his Bounty. In a word, he is infinitely good in himself, and he is unspeakably good to all his Creatures; so that we have all infinite reason to pray unto God, to give us an Heart to love him above all things:

things : which all are to join, and say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Thirdly, We pray here for Hearts not only to love, but to fear God : That it may please thee to give us an Heart to love and dread thee. Now this Fear of God is such an aweful Reverence and Dread of the Divine Majesty, as makes Men careful to obey, and fearful to offend. So the Wise-man describes it, saying, *The Fear of the Lord is to depart from Evil*, Prov. 16. 6. which aweful Reverence and Apprehension of the Divine Majesty is seated within ; for as all the Passions are seated in and spring from the Soul, so this Religious Fear is rooted in the Heart, and proceeds from a Mind stricken with it from above.

'Tis founded upon a Sense of the infinite Power and impartial Justice of God : we love him for his Goodness, and fear him for his Greatness ; his Justice makes him take vengeance of our Sins, and his Power enables him to execute it to the utmost, for he punishes it with temporal Punishments here, and with eternal Damnation hereafter. And therefore our Saviour teaches us whom to fear ; *Be not afraid (saith he) of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do, but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, Fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell : yea, I say unto you, fear him.* Luke 12. 5, 6. And there is great reason for it, for who can stand before him when he is angry ? Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy, (saith the Apostle) are we stronger than he ? No, 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. 10. 31. which may well enough make us afraid to offend him. And therefore we are often call'd upon to fear the Lord, which is both the Beginning and End of Wisdom. The Prophet *Isaiah* wills us to *make him our Fear and our Dread*, and the Psalmist bids us to *stand in awe of him and sin not*, Psal. 4. 4. where standing in awe is prescrib'd as a good means to prevent sinning against him. He that feareth another, whom he knows able and ready to punish him, will beware of provoking him ; and if we have a dread of the Divine Power upon our Minds, we shall take care how we offend. Hence a good Man is describ'd in Scripture to be *one that feareth God and escheweth Evil* : and a bad Man to be *one that hath no Fear of God before his eyes* ; and so runs into all Excess of Riot, and commits all Uncleanness with greediness. The former is restrain'd

by the Fear of God from doing any Evil ; the man having cast off all Awe and Dread of him, has no check to keep him from the vilest Enormities.

And here we may take notice of a twofold Fear of God : The one a filial Fear of him as a tender and loving Father, that made and preserves us, and daily takes care to provide for us, whom we are therefore fearful of offending. This is, in the Prophet's Phrase, to fear the Lord for his Goodness, Hos. 3. 5. and as David expresses it, there is Mercy with thee, O Lord, and therefore thou shalt be feared ; Psal. 130. 4. This Fear proceeds from a Principle of Love, and a grateful Sense of our manifold Obligations to our Heavenly Father, and resembles the ingenuous Fear of a dutiful Son, who is unwilling to displease an affectionate and indulgent Parent.

The other is a servile Fear of God, as a Judge and a severe Master, who exacts Duty and Service from us, and will render to every one according to his Works, which creates some fear of disobeying him : and this proceeds from a Principle of Terror and Dread of God's Judgments, which tho' not so good a Principle as that of Love before mention'd, is yet not altogether an unwarrantable or unacceptable Motive of Obedience ; for God having set before us both Rewards and Punishments, to draw us to him by the one, or to drive us to him by the other, if they attain their Effect either way to bring us to him, he will not fail to receive and give us a gracious Welcome. For God hath told us of his Wrath and Judgments to make us fear him, as well as of his Mercy and Goodness to make us love him ; and seeks to work upon us both ways : If I am a Father, where is my Love ; if a Master, where is my Fear ? saith the Lord of Hosts ; Mal. 1. 6. And the Psalmist calls upon us to serve the Lord with Fear, and to rejoice before him with Trembling ; Psal. 2. 11. And because there are so many Temptations to cast off the Fear as well as the Love of God, we are to pray to him, to give us Hearts to love and dread him, and that nothing may be able to move or draw us from either ; and let all the People say, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

But here is one thing more that we are to ask for ourselves ; and that is,

Fourthly, For Hearts diligently to live after God's Commandments ; and herein we shall be mightily assisted by the

the foregoing Principles of Love and Fear; for where the Love of God is planted in the Heart, there it will be dispos'd to obey and keep God's Commandments: yea, *the Love of God constraineth us*, saith the Apostle. And where the Fear of God rules in the Heart, there it will keep us from breaking his Laws, for the Fear of God restraineth from Evil. *If ye love me* (saith our Saviour) *keep my Commandments*, John 14. 15. where Love is made both the Mark and the Motive of Obedience. And bear the conclusion of the whole matter (saith Solomon) *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the Whole of Man*; Eccles. 12. 13. where the Fear of God is coupled with keeping his Commandments, as things that commonly go together, and both make up the whole Duty, the whole End and Happiness of Man.

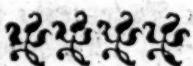
Now the Commandments of God being some of them positive, requiring some things to be done; and others of them negative, forbidding other things to be done; the Love of God will incline us to fulfil the one, by doing the things requir'd, and the Fear of God will dispose us to keep the other, by abstaining from the things forbidden by them. And therefore we should pray to God for Hearts to love and dread him, and they will dispose us diligently to live after his Commandments; for the main reason of Mens violating God's Laws, is the want of those two excellent Graces. Where the Love of God is wanting, there will be no care to please him, by doing what he commands; and where the Awe and Dread of God is wanting, there will be no fear of offending him, by doing what he hath forbidden. It must be therefore new Hearts and new Spirits, that must rectify these things in us, and turn the Bent of our Desires and Inclinations to the keeping God's Commandments. We are naturally averse to the observing of the Divine Laws; our corrupt Hearts have a wrong byass, that carries away clear from them; which made *David* complain of the Men of his time, that *they were all gone out of the way, they were altogether become abominable, there was none that did good, no not one.* *Destruction and Unhappiness were in their ways, and the way of Peace they knew not; there was no Fear of God before their Eyes: His ways were always grievous to them, and his Judgments were remov'd far out of their sight*; Psal. 14. 4, 7. This Averseness and Enmity to God's Laws is found in all Men by Nature, till they are regenerated by divine Grace; that is, till God create a clean

Heart, and renew a right Spirit within them, the better to dispose them to walk in the ways of his Commandments. To this end he promis'd to put his Law into their Hearts, and to write it in their inward parts; to give them a new Heart, and to put a new Spirit within them; taking away the Heart of Stone, and giving them a Heart of Flesh, that they may walk in his Statutes, and keep his Ordinances, to do them: Jer. 31. 33. Ezek. 11. 19, 20. & Chap. 36. 26, 27. By all which it appears, how fitly our Church here teaches us to pray unto God, to give us an Heart diligently to live after his Commandments.

Thus we see what we are directed to ask of God for our selves; namely, for Hearts to love and dread him, and to live in all due obedience to his righteous and just Laws.

Let us therefore frequently address to the Maker and Searcher of Hearts, to new-mould and fashion them according to his own Will, that they may be capable of the Impressions of Divine Love; that we may receive his Fear and Dread into our Minds, and be inclin'd obediently to keep his Commandments.

We cannot do these things for our selves, but his Grace will be sufficient for us, which he is ever ready to bestow upon all that diligently seek for it. Our Suit therefore must be to him for these heavenly Vertues; and to our Prayers let us add our best Endeavours for them, with which he is always willing to concur, and to bring them to good effect. To which end, let us set God always before us, that by the Contemplation of his infinite Goodnes in himself and towards us, we may learn to love and adore him; and by the Sense of his Power and Justice, we may be dispos'd to fear and stand in awe of him: and, lastly, by a due Consideration of his Greatnes and Authority over us, we may live in all humble Duty and Observance of all his Precepts. In a word, let us beg of him to change and mollify our Hearts, that they may be pliable to all these Purposes, and let all the People join and say, *We beseech thee to bear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XX.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st and 2d Verses.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all Men, &c.

I Shew'd in my last what Supplications and Prayers are to be made for our selves, *viz.* that God would plant in our Hearts the Love and Fear of his holy Name, and by both incline us diligently to walk in the Ways of his Commandments.

The next Paragraph of the Litany directs us, what Intercessions are to be made for all God's People; and that is contain'd in these following Words: *That it may please thee to give to all thy People Increase of Grace, to hear meekly thy Word, to receive it with pure Affection, and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.* Where by all God's People (as hath been before shew'd) we are to understand all Christian People, all that have given up their Names unto Christ, and by Baptism enter'd into Covenant with him, whereby God vouchsafes to become *their God, and they his People.*

The things we are here taught to ask in their behalf, are,

First, The Increase of Grace, which we pray God to give them.

Secondly, The hearing of his Word with Meekness, that is, with Humility and Submission.

Thirdly, The receiving it with pure Affection, that is, without Prejudice or Partiality.

Fourthly, The bringing forth the Fruits of it with Patience. All which being necessary to all God's People, must be particularly handled. And,

First, We pray God to give to all his People, Increase of Grace; where by *Grace* we understand those Habits of Virtue, or gracious Dispositions of Soul, that are wrought in it by the Holy Spirit of God, whereby it becomes in some measure like unto God, and is accepted by him: which Graces are of divers kinds, and admit of different degrees, as we shall see after. These

These Graces we are to pray for, not only for our selves, but others, yea, for all the People of God, that he would give to them and us Grace to walk before him unto all well-pleasing; that he would pour his Grace into their Hearts, and out of his Fulness give them Grace for Grace, John 1. 16. that is, Grace like unto his Grace, or Grace upon Grace, that is, one Grace of the Spirit after another; daily pouring new Graces upon them, till they come to abound in all Grace, and have their Hearts firmly rooted and establish'd in Grace. This seems to suit this Petition of the Litany, that God would give his People the Increase of Grace, not resting contented in any lower measures and degrees of it, but to be daily growing in Grace, and encreasing in it more and more: for 'tis not enough to become good, but we must be still growing better; for Grace receiv'd, if not improv'd, will be in danger of being lost or taken away, as may be learnt from the Parable of the Talents,

Non progrexi, est regredi. Mat. 25. Not to go forward in Grace, is to go backward; there is no standing at a stay in this matter, if we advance not in the ways

of Virtue, we shall surely be hurried back; not to grow better, is the certain way to grow worse, and if the Stock of Grace do not increase, it will unavoidably diminish and come to nothing. And therefore we are often call'd upon to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; 2 Pet. 3. 18. lest we daily lose ground, and decay in both. Hence we find St. Paul almost in all his Epistles praying for this Increase of Grace in all Christians. In his Epistle to the Philippians he prays that their Love might abound more and more in Knowledg, and in all Judgment, that they might approve the things that are excellent, that they might be sincere and without offence, being fill'd with the Fruits of Righteousness to the Praise and Glory of God; Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. In his Epistle to the Colossians, he tells them that he ceas'd not to pray for them, that they might be fill'd with the Knowledg of his Will in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding, that they might be fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledg of God, being strengthen'd with all Might by his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness; Col. 1. 9, 10, 11. Again in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, he pray'd night and day to perfect what was lacking in their Faith, that the Lord would make them increase in Love one towards another, and establish their Hearts in Holiness to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; 1 Thess. 3. 12, 13.

From

From these pious Examples, our Church hath inserted this Petition in the Litany for the Increase of Grace in all God's People; which we are the more embolden'd to ask, from God's gracious Promise to give his Grace and holy Spirit to them that ask it; and that they who have it, and use it aright, shall have it more abundantly. In order to which, we are here directed to pray,

Secondly, That they may bear weekly God's holy Word. The Hearing of God's Word is the ordinary way and means of his dispensing his Grace to us, for *Faith comes by Hearing* (saith the Apostle) and *Hearing by the Word of God;* Rom. 10. 17. The more serious and diligent we are in hearing of his Word, the more shall we grow in Grace, and increase in the Knowldg of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent: to which end, we are here directed to a double Duty; the one is, to the hearing of God's Word; and the other is, to the hearing it with Meekness. For the

1st, To the hearing of God's Word we have many and strict Precepts in Holy Scripture; *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you* (saith Moses of our blessed Saviour) *him shall ye hear in all things; whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroy'd from among the People;* Acts 3. 22, 23. *Incline your Ear, and come unto me* (saith God by the Prophet *Isaiah*) *hear, and your Soul shall live;* Isa. 55. 3. *He that is of God* (saith our Saviour) *heareth God's Words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God;* John 8. 37. meaning, that they who are regenerate and born of God, will hear the Voice of God speaking in his Word, as Children do the Voice of their Father; and consequently they that refuse to hear his Word are none of his Children; Mat. 13. 9. 'Twas the frequent Call of Christ to his Followers, and of the Angels to the seven Churches of *Asia*, *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches;* Rev. 2. 11, 29. And St. James wills all Christians, to be swift to hear.

But yet 'tis not all kind of hearing or lending an ear to God's Word, that will promote our Growth in Grace; for we read in the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8. that of the four sorts of Hearers there was but one came to good: and the Word of God proves to many, not so much the *Savour of Life unto Life, as of Death unto Death.* And there-

therefore we are taught here, not barely to hear, but to bear meekly the Word of God: that is, with humble and teachable Hearts; for God resisteth the Proud, and gives his Grace only to the Humble. The Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, that the Word preach'd profited not the Jews, because it was not mix'd with Faith in them that heard it; Heb. 4. 2. Nor will the Words we hear profit us, unless they are mix'd with Meekness and Humility: *The Meek will be guide in Judgment* (saith the Psalmist, Psal. 25. 9.) *and the Humble will he teach his way.* These are the best Dispositions of Soul, to fit us to receive benefit by Hearing. The first step to Knowledg is to be sensible of our own Ignorance; for that will keep us humble and tractable, willing to learn, and to lend an ear to Instruction: whereas Pride and Self-conceit are great Obstacles to all Proficiency in Wisdom and Knowledg, for these beget a Neglect or Contempt of all the good means of attaining them; none will seek or labour for Wisdom, who thinks himself wise enough already; nor will any strive to be better, who takes himself to be already perfect: And therefore Solomon asks the question, *Seest thou a Man wise in his own Conceit?* and then tells us, that *there is more hope of a Fool, than of him*, Prov. 26. 12. for the one may be willing to hear, but the other is deaf to all Instruction. So that to hear the Word with profit, and to increase in Grace, is to hear it with Meekness and Lowlines of Mind, not setting up our own Judgment above our Teachers, or thinking our selves wiser than those who are appointed to instruct and govern us: for that will make us unteachable, and hinder all progress in Grace and Knowledg; to prevent which, St. James advises us to *receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able to save our Souls;* James 1. 21. And elsewhere asks, *Who is a wise Man and endow'd with Knowledg among you; let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom:* Chap. 3. 13. For Strife and Envying deprive us of God's Blessing, and instead of increasing, bring on a Decay of Piety and Grace in our Hearts. And therefore our Church exhorts all good People with meek Hearts and due Reverence to hear and receive God's holy Word, which will incline them to be guided by its Directions, and to amend by its Reproofs. And this is what the Litany here teaches us to pray for in the behalf of all God's People, that in order to their Increase of Grace, they may hear meekly God's holy Word. To which end, it farther prays,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That they may receive it with pure Affection. The Affections are describ'd to be those Powers and Faculties of the Soul, by which it receives any thing into the closest Embraces and nearest Union with it self: and so to receive the Word with Affection, is to receive not only the Light of it into the Understanding, but the Love of it into the Heart.

By pure Affection we understand Desires purify'd from the Love of Evil, and carry'd out in the pursuit only of that which is good. So that to receive the Word with pure Affection, is to receive it into pure and clean Hearts, purg'd from all Filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness, and refin'd by the Holy Spirit of God. And so to receive it, is the way to become fruitful in every good Word and Work; and that will promote our Growth and Increase in Grace. If we sow the Seed of God's Word into the stony Ground of a hard Heart, it will take no root, and make no impression: if we sow it among Briars and Thorns, it will be choak'd by the Cares of this World; but if we sow it into honest and good Hearts, it will bring forth Fruit abundantly. In like manner, if we put these Waters of Life into pure and clean Vessels, they will retain their Sweetness, and be an Offering unto God of a sweet-smelling Savour; but if we put them into tainted Vessels, they will receive a corrupt Tincture, and stink in his Nostrils.

But to speak more particularly; to receive the Word of God with pure Affection, is chiefly to receive it into Hearts free, 1st, from all Guile and Hypocrisy; and, 2^{dly}, from all Prejudice and Partiality. All which must be laid aside, and weeded out of the Soul, before it can thrive or grow in Grace.

1st, I say, we must lay aside all Guile and Hypocrisy, and Envies and Evil-speaking, and as new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. This is St. Peter's Advice, who wills all Christians to receive the Word of God with the Innocence and Simplicity of a new-born Child, which is perfectly free from all manner of Guile and Hypocrisy; and to suck in the pure and spiritual Nourishment of sound Doctrine, as the Infant does the Mother's Milk, without any Deceit or corrupt Design. He that does so, is said to receive it with pure Affection; whereas he that hears the Word only for a show, or to carry on some evil purpose, is said to receive it

it with *Guile and Hypocrisy*, for he makes the Word of God an Instrument of Deceit, and by it makes merchandize of unstable Souls. St. Paul makes mention of such *deceitful Workers* in his time, who for bad ends transform'd themselves into the *Apostles of Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 13. And we have some such among our selves, who corrupt the Word of God, and deal deceitfully therein both with God and Man. In short, Guile poisons and pollutes the most specious Works, and Hypocrisy mars the most religious and virtuous Actions; and nothing can restore them to their Rectitude and Reward, but Purity of Affection and Intention.

2dly, To receive the Word with pure Affection, is to lay aside all Prejudices in the hearing of it. Now these Prejudices are either against the Word preach'd, by doubting whether it be indeed the Word of God; or against the Preacher of it, whether he be truly qualify'd, for Life and Manners, to dispense it. Where the Mind is possess'd with these or the like Prejudices, there the Word can have little or no efficacy or operation upon the Hearts of the Hearers. And therefore these must be all remov'd, if we mean to hear and receive the Word with pure Affection: for the Affections are sometimes stil'd the Eyes of the Soul, by which she sees and judges of the Objects presented to them; and if these be either blinded or blear'd with Prejudices, they will not be able to discern any thing aright, but will take *Evil for Good, and Good for Evil, Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness, Sweet for Bitter, and Bitter for Sweet*: and so the Affections will be all irregular and disorder'd. And therefore the Heart must be empty'd of these disorderly Passions, before it can receive the Word with pure Affection, or steer its Course aright. *The Words of the Lord are pure Words*, saith the Psalmist, and so to be receiv'd with Purity of Mind and Intention. And this is the way to procure that *Increase of Grace*, which we here pray for: without it, all our Pains in hearing, and all our Endeavours of receiving the Word of God, will be but lost labour; for tho' Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, yet 'tis God only that gives the Increase. 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7, 8.

3dly, To hear the Word with pure Affection, is to lay aside all Partiality, not picking and chusing what to hear, and turning the deaf ear to what does not please our Humour, but to bear an equal regard to all God's Commandments, being all stamp'd with the same Authority; to be willing to hear Reproofs, and to amend upon them. By

this means we shall receive the Fulness of God's Grace, and daily increase in it more and more; which is what we here pray for in the behalf of all God's People: who should therefore say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

The last thing we ask here for all God's People, is for *Grace, to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.* What these Fruits of the Spirit are, the Apostle tells us, *Gal. 5. 22, 23.* *The Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.* Where *Love* leads the Van, as being the most principal of all Graces, and the Cause of all the rest. And this *Love*, as it relates to God, is that Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to the nearest Union and Communion with him. As it relates to Men, it is such a tender Affection towards them, as disposes us to wish and promote their Welfare.

Next to that is *Joy*, which as it refers to God, is a Rejoicing in his Glory, and in doing things that are well-pleasing to him. As it refers to Men, 'tis a Rejoicing in any Good that betides them.

After that, follows *Peace*; which, with relation to God, is our being reconcil'd to him, and receiv'd into his Favour; with respect to Men, 'tis the preserving of Love and Amity with all Persons. To effect which, there must be,

In the next place, *Long-suffering*; that is, a patient bearing of the Injuries and Provocations of other Men: *Gentleness*, which will restrain from all Hatred and Revenge: *Goodness*, which will cherish a Kindness in our Dispositions, and preserve it in all our Actions: *Faith*, or Fidelity in all our Commerce and Intercourse with one another. Moreover, *Meekness* and *Temperance*, which relate to our selves, bring up the rear in this Catalogue of Virtues; the one being a Quietness in our own Spirits, the other a Moderation in the Use of God's Creatures. These are the Fruits of the Spirit here refer'd to, and if we labour to bring them forth in our Lives, we shall certainly arrive to that Increase of Grace, which we here pray for. When we use the means of God's own appointing, he is never wanting to give his Blessing; and if we thus plant and water the Seeds of Virtue within us, they cannot fail of an Increase. They are sometimes term'd *the Fruits of Righteousness*, and Fruits that *redound to the Glory of God*, James 3. 18. as well as our own Good: for herein is my Father glorify'd (saith our Saviour) *that ye bring forth much Fruit*; John 15. 8.

Thus

Thus we see the Sense and Meaning of this Petition in the Litany, wherein we beg for our selves and all God's People the Increase of Grace, as the only way that leads to Glory.

For the Attainment whereof, let us not only pray, but endeavour to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; not resting in any lower measures and degrees of Grace, but going on still to Perfection, and with St. Paul to be still pressing forward towards the Mark, for the Price of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; Phil. 3. 14. At our Regeneration or new Birth, we are but Babes in Christ, and such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat, Heb. 5. 12. And therefore St. Peter would have his new Converts, as new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 1. And St. Paul tells the Corinthians, that in the beginning he fed them with Milk, and not with strong Meat, 1 Cor. 3. 2. till they came to the perfect Stature of Men in Christ Jesus; when being of full Age, he fed them with stronger Meats, and having their Senses exercis'd to discern both Good and Evil, he led them on to greater Perfection; which may teach us to take the like course in our progres in Christianity, first sucking in the Milk of the Word, and after taking the stronger Meat of the holy Sacrament; which being a strengthning Ordinance, will tend much to our Increase in Grace. In order to which,

Let us (as our Church here directs) hear the Word of God with Meekness and Submission, saying with Samuel, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* And let us mix it with Faith, without which it cannot profit, nor help to the Increase of the Body, or edifying of it self in Love. To effect which,

Let us next receive the Word with pure Affection; that is, with Hearts free from all Pride, Prejudice, and Partia-lity: receiving the Love of the Truth into our Hearts, which being planted there, will soon spring up and help us to grow in Grace, unto the measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ. Eph. 4. 13.

Lastly, Let us so hear and receive the Word of God, as to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit; adding to our Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledg, to Knowledg Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godliness, to Godli-ness brotherly Kindness, and to brotherly Kindness Cha-
rity;

tity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you not to be barren or unfruitful in the Knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ. And having thus our Fruit unto Holiness, we shall in the end reap everlasting Life: which that it may happen to us and to all God's People, let us all say,
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.



DISCOURSE XXI.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men, &c.

THE last Intercession I discours'd of, was in the behalf of all God's People, That he would give them the Increase of his Grace, that they might daily grow and improve in the Knowledg of all Divine Truths, and be thereby enabled to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.

The next Intercession, of which I am now to treat, is in the behalf of such as want the Knowledg of the Truth, or have been unhappily drawn and seduc'd from it, in these words: *That it may please thee to bring into the way of Truth, all such as have erred and are deceived.* Where we must consider,

First, The Persons interceded for; and they are, all such as have erred and are deceived.

Secondly, The Petition that is put up for them; and that is, that God will be pleas'd to bring them into the way of Truth. For the

First, The Persons here interceded for, are all such as have erred and are deceived; which may refer to, and include two sorts of Persons:

1st, Such as have erred through their own Negligence and Folly. And,

2dly, Such as have been drawn aside and deceiv'd by the Subtlety of others. The one is describ'd here by their erring, and the other by their being deceived; and both

being out of their way, are to be pity'd and pray'd for; and if possible to be brought back and put into the way that they should go. I begin then with the

1st Sort, that is, with such as have err'd. To err, we know, is to wander out of the right way, and to fall into by and forbidden Paths, where we many times become intangled, and often lose our selves. This is what our Church teaches us to confess, in our daily and publick Confession, viz. that we have err'd and strayed from God's ways like lost Sheep; and instead of hearkening to the infallible Dictates of God's Holy Spirit, have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own Heart. Sheep, we know, to whom God's People are often compar'd, are apt sometimes to go astray, and are thereby expos'd to great hazards, and in danger of being lost: *All we like Sheep have gone astray* (saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 53. 6.) *we have turned every one to his own way*. David acknowledges of himself, that he had gone astray like a lost Sheep: *O seek thy Servant, that I may not forsake thy Commandments.* Psal. 139. 176. *Ye were as Sheep going astray* (saith St. Peter) *till ye return'd to the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls.* 1 Pet. 2. 25. This is the Case of many a Soul to this day, who err from the Ways of God's Commandments, and wander in the Ways of their own Hearts, from which nothing but the Voice or Call of the Shepherd is able to reduce or reclaim them: and if they are deaf to his Call, and instead of hearing the Voice of the Shepherd, follow Wolves in Sheep's Clothing, they must be led and lost too in the ways of Destruction.

Now Erring here is either in Opinion or Practice: the one is erring from the Truth, by mistaking or mis-judging of Matters; the other is erring from the Rule which is given us to walk by: and both of them may be either thro Weaknes and Ignorance, for want of the means of knowing better; or else thro Wilfulness and Obstinacy, for not making use of the means of Knowledge vouchsafed to them, but shutting their Eyes against the Light, and closing their Ears against Instruction, refusing with the deaf Adder to hear the Voice of the Charmer, tho' he charm never so wisely.

For the first, to err from the Truth thro Weakness and invincible Ignorance, for want of the means of knowing better, is a matter that may admit of some Excuse, and deserve some Pity; for God is not so hard a Master, as to expect to reap where he hath not sowed, or gather where he hath

hath not sinned. And this was the Case of the Heathens of old, who never had the means or opportunity of hearing and believing in Christ; and this is the Case of some Barbarous and Mahometan Countries to this day, who wanting the Means of Knowledg, live and die in many pardonable and excusable Errors.

But this is not the Case of Christians under the Gospel, for they have the Light of Divine Truths clearly shining round about them, they have the Voice of Instruction daily sounding in their ears, and all the Means of Grace and Knowledg liberally imparted to them; so that they cannot be ignorant of their Duty, without their own gross Neglect and Contempt of the Means vouchsafed to them, their Sins and Errors must lie at their own door. And *this is the Condemnation spoken of by our Saviour, that Light is come into the World, but some Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.* And this must heighten the Evil of their Errors, and increase their Condemnation, above others who were destitute of those Advantages. This we may learn from our Saviour's Account of this matter, who hath told us, that *it shall be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for Tyre and Sydon, who never heard of Christ, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, who heard his Doctrine, and saw his Miracles; both which were sufficient to convince and convert the sturdiest People.* *And thou Capernaum (saith he) which art exalted up to Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remain'd until this day.* Mat. xi. 22, 23. By which it appears to be far more criminal to err against Knowledg, than without it; and to shut the Eyes against the Light, will doom Men to blacker Darkness than to be wholly destitute of it: for 'tis better (saith St. Peter) *not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment.* 2 Pet. 2. 1. And this is the first sort of Persons we here intercede for, namely, *such as have erred, either by invincible or affected Ignorance;* that is, such as have miss'd their way, either for want of Knowledg, or by not following the Guidance and Direction of it; both which being out of the right way, and wandring in the By-paths of Sin and Error, call for our Pity, and need our Prayers.

The second sort is, *such as are deceiv'd by the Subtlety of others.* Of this kind, there have been many from the begin-

ginning of Christianity: Our Saviour caution'd his Disciples against being deceiv'd by any, telling them, that many would come in his Name, and deceive many, Mat. 24. 5, yea, that there should arise false Christs and false Prophets, that would shew such great Signs and Wonders, as, if it were possible, would deceive the very Elect: ver. 24. Some, he tells us, will come in Sheep's Clothing, to betray the Flock into their clutches by outward Shows, when inwardly they were ravenous Wolves, Mat. 7. 15. designing to devour whom they pretend to feed. St. Paul foretold, that after his departing, grievous Wolves would enter in, not sparing the Flock; also of their own selves would Men arise, speaking perverse things to draw Disciples after them. Acts 20. 29, 30. And therefore he advis'd the Romans, to mark them that caus'd Divisions among them, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly, and with good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the Simple. Rom. 16. 18, 19. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, he speaks of the Sleight of Men, and the cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Eph. 4. 14. meaning, the Arts and Diligence of Deceivers to draw Men into the Snares of Error and Deceit: by which they become like Children toss'd to and fro, and carry'd about with every Wind of Doctrine: working upon them with all Deceitableness of Unrighteousness, 2 Thess. 2. 10. with *ὑπερβολὴ τῆς αἰώνων*, with all the Power and Efficacy of Error. In the Epistle to Timothy we read of false Teachers, that creep into Houses, and lead captive silly Women laden with Sin, and led about with divers Lusts; 2 Tim. 3. 6. These turn away the Ears of the People from the Truth, and turn them unto Fables, Chap. 4. 3, 4. by means whereof, they cannot endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears.

Thus it was in the early days of Christianity, when false Christs, false Prophets, and false Apostles appear'd in the World, and deceiv'd many to their utter ruin: and thus it continues in our days, wherein false Teachers are gone abroad and abound in the World, who privily bring in damnable Heresies; some denying the God that made them, others denying the Lord that bought them, others again denying the Church that receiv'd them; and many there be that follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of Truth is evil spoken of. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Such false Teachers draw the People into Sects and Parties, dividing the one Body.

Body of Christ by Schisms and Separations, and breaking the Peace and Unity of the Church by different Doctrines and Communions. Which Fickleness and Unsoundness in Religion is the great Malady and Misery of our present Age.

Now all they who are unhappily drawn aside by such false Teachers, and seduc'd by them into Sects and Divisions, are the Persons here mention'd in the Litany, under the stile of, *all such as have erred and are deceived.* Whereby those *that have erred*, some understand the Heads and Ringleaders of Parties; and by those *that are deceiv'd*, the vulgar People that are misled and seduc'd by them: And both together comprise the Persons here pray'd for, viz. *all such as have erred and are deceived*; the first Thing propounded.

The Second is, the Petition that is here put up for them; and that is, *That it may please God to bring all such into the way of Truth.* Where by *the way of Truth*, mention'd by St. Peter, 2 Epist. 2. 2. we are to understand the Knowldg of God's Word, which contains true and sound Doctrine, and teaches the true way to eternal Salvation. *Thy Word is Truth*, saith our Saviour, John 17. 17. call'd therefore *the Word of Truth*, Col. 1. 5. because it discovers to us the true Mind and Will of God, *who is Truth it self*, and the true way that leads to him, who is the *Author of all Truth that is according to Godliness*, Tit. 1. 1. St. Peter calls it *a sure Word of Prophecy*, whereunto we do well to take heed, as to a *Light shining in a dark place*; 2 Pet. 1. 19. 'Tis stil'd *the way of Truth*, in opposition to all other ways of Instruction or pretended Revelation, which are all but ways of Error and Falshood. The Traditions of Men are liable to Mistake, and the Pretences to Inspiration are commonly feigned and fallacious, so that we may err by the one, and be deceiv'd by the other. But the Word of God is a certain and infallible way of Truth, that cannot err or deceive us. When we leave that, and follow the ways of our own Invention, we unavoidably wander, and walk in the way that leads to Destruction. *Ye err* (saith our Saviour to the Sadduces) *not knowing the Scriptures*, which alone contain *the Words of eternal Life*, Mat. 22. 29. and can only shew the right way unto it. So that to bring into the way of Truth those that have erred and have been deceived from it, is,

1st, To bring them to a right understanding of God's holy Word.

And then to incline them to a due Obedience and Observance of his Laws.

1st, I say, to reduce those to the way of Truth, that have been seduc'd from it, they must come to the true Knowledg and Understanding of the Holy Scriptures; for tho the Word of God be the Rule and Standard of our Duty, yet it cannot direct aright without a right Understanding of it: And therefore the Psalmist prays unto God, to open his Eyes, that he might see the wondrous things of his Law; Psal. 119. What Light is to the Eye, that is Knowledg to the Soul, the principal thing to guide it in its way, And because the Word of God is the Fountain of all true Wisdom and Knowledg, therefore our chief Study should be, to search the Scriptures, and to find out the true Sense and Meaning of them, that we may know spiritual matters aright, and become wise unto Salvation. St. Peter speaks of some that wrest the Scriptures to their own and others Destruction, drawing those things from them that were never in them. Hence some have made the Bible an Engine to overturn Church and State, and forc'd the Gospel of Peace to speak Blood and Confusion. The Pharisees of old corrupted the Law by their Traditions, and misled many by their false Glosses and Interpretations; which made our Saviour expound it over again, to rescue it from their Errors, and to restore it to its true Sense and Meaning: and we have had false Teachers that have seduc'd many into great Errors, by falsifying and misinterpreting the Word of Truth. Hence all Sectaries and Hereticks seek patronage for their several Opinions from the Holy Scriptures, and each of them persuade themselves, that they find them there, when nothing but their vain Dreams and Fancies bring them thither: like those that look into a Glass, where every one sees his own Face, not that it was there before, but because he brings his Face to it; so every Sect sees the Face of his own Religion in the Holy Scriptures, which his strong Fancy or Prejudice only brought to them, and so thinks he sees that in the Scripture, which in truth is only in his own Imagination. To cure these Evils,

We are here directed to pray unto God, to enlighten our Minds with the Knowledg of Divine Truths, and likewise to have recourse to our spiritual Guides and Pastors, who are appointed to teach and instruct us; for the Priest's

Lips preserve Knowldg, and the People are to seek the Law from his Mouth; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.
Mal. 2. 7.

2dly, To bring into the way of Truth such as have erred and are deceiv'd, they must learn to obey the Truth as far as 'tis made known to them, to submit to it, and not to withstand the Evidence of it, *for he that doth the Will of my Father* (saith our Saviour) *he shall know the Truth whether it be of God;* John 7. 17. God rewardeth every degree of Obedience to him with the farther Knowldg of his Will, and they that live up to what they know, shall know more abundantly. Such as use their Talents amiss, will be depriv'd of them; but they that use them aright, shall receive more. St. Paul thank'd God in the behalf of the Romans, *that they obey'd from the Heart the Form of Doctrine that was deliver'd to them;* Rom. 6. 17. They did not oppose, but heartily obey'd the Truth, and receiv'd with Meekness the ingrafted Word, *that was able to save their Souls.* By which means they were converted from Paganism and Idolatry, and from Heathens became Christians. This is the way to come out of Error, and to attain to the Knowldg of the Truth. 'Tis Obstinacy and Perverseness that shut Men up in the Darkness of Error, and keep the Light of Truth from shining out upon them. He that closes his Eyes, may stumble and fall at noon-day; and they that will not learn or believe, must walk in Darkness, even in the Sun-shine of the Gospel. And therefore they must labour for Humility and Lowliness of Mind, if they hope to be taught of God; and to submit to their Teachers and lawful Pastors, if they mean to be put into the way of Truth: whereunto they have already attain'd, they should walk by the same rule; and then wherein they are otherwise minded, God will in due time reveal it unto them; for the Meek he will guide in Judgment, and the Humble he will teach his way.

This is what we here pray for in the behalf of all such as have erred and are deceiv'd, viz. that they who have erred may see their Error, and be turn'd from Darkness to Light; and that they who are deceiv'd may be sensible of the Imposture, and learn to go aright. And this we should the rather do,

- { 1.) Because 'tis easy to err and go astray; and,
2.) Because 'tis dangerous to be deceiv'd, and to be drawn out of the right way.

(1.) I say 'tis easy to err and go astray; for the right way is but one, but the by and crooked Paths are many and various: *Veritas unica est, Error autem multiplex*; the Way of Truth is but one, but the Cross-ways of Error are many. And as 'tis sometimes difficult to find the one, so is it easy to wander and to be misled into the other. Our Saviour tells us, that there are but few that enter into the strait Gate, and walk in the narrow Way that leads to Life; but there are many that find and walk in the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction. Bad Examples and wrong Information easily turn Men out of the right way, especially having the false Byass of a corrupt Nature to incline them to it: And the way of Truth is sometimes beset with those Difficulties and Discouragements, which, together with a natural Averseness to that which is good, too strongly draw from it. And therefore we are to pray to God, who alone can change our Natures, and overcome these Temptations, to keep us and all Men from going amiss.

Beside, (2.) The Danger of erring and being deceiv'd in these weighty matters, is great enough to increase the Ardor of our Devotion; for St. Peter calls them *damnable Heresies*, 2 Pet. 2. 1. which lead to and end in Damnation. They that persist in their Errors, and receive not the Truth in the Love of it, will be given up to strong Delusions, to believe Lyes, that they all may be damn'd that believe not the Truth, but have pleasure in Unrighteousness; 2 Thess. 2. 12, 13. We cannot err or stray from God's ways, without the danger of being lost Sheep. And therefore let us pray God to reduce all wandring Sheep to the Fold, and bring them back to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls: to which end, let us beseech him to give them humble and teachable Spirits, willing to learn, and ready to obey; to take from them all Pride, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of God's Word and Commandments, which are the Obstacles of Truth, and the Causes of Error. Christ hath stild himself *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John 14. 6. He is the Way by his Example, the Truth by his Doctrine, and the Life by his purchasing and procuring it for us; and 'tis he alone can bring us to it. Wherefore let us stick to him, and to his Church, as the only safe and infallible way to Salvation. Let us beware of the Errors of the Romanists on the one hand, and the Deceits of Sectaries and Dissenters on the other; and adhere firmly to the Doctrine,

trine, Discipline and Communion of the Church of England, which is free from the Errors and Corruptions of both.

In a word, if we love the Brethren, and tender the Salvation of their Souls, let us heartily pray unto God, to bring into the way of Truth all those of them that have err'd from it, or are deceiv'd by false Teachers: and let all the People join in this Petition, and say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XXII.

1 TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men..

I Shew'd in my last, what Prayers and Intercessions are to be made for all such as have err'd from the Truth, or been deceiv'd into Heresies and Divisions; and they were, that it would please God to bring all such into the way of Truth, and both direct and keep them in the Path that leads to everlasting Life.

The next Paragraph of the Litany relates to such as are already in the way of Truth, some whereof are more strong, and able to stand, others are more weak and faint-hearted, others again are more staggering and apt to fall. Now the Intercessions we are to make for all these, are contain'd in the following Words; viz. *That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up them that fall, and finally to beat down Satan under our feet.* Where we have four different Petitions, in the behalf of so many different sorts of Persons; of each of which particularly.

The First Petition is, *That it may please God to strengthen such as do stand.* Where the Persons pray'd for, are such as do stand; the Petition put up for them, is to strengthen them to keep their standing. By such as do stand, are meant the more strong and confirm'd Christians, that are able to

bear the shock of Temptation, and to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. 'Tis an Allusion to Fighters, among whom the Stronger stand and keep their ground, when the Weaker flee and run away. Indeed a Christian's Life is often in Scripture compar'd to a Warfare, wherein we enter the Lists with the Devil, the World and the Flesh, our ghostly Enemies. In which Combate some more manfully withstand their Assaults, and resist all their Temptations, than others, and so acquit themselves like good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, enduring Hardships, and going thro Trials and Afflictions with greater Bravery and Courage, than other Men. And these are the Persons, who are here said to stand, and whom we pray God to strengthen.

But here it may be ask'd, what need we to pray God to strengthen them who are strong enough to stand already?

In answer to this, I say,

1st, That our own Strength, consider'd in it self, is no better than Weakness, and would soon fail without a continual Supply of Divine Succour. Satan, the World, and the Flesh will be too hard for the strongest of us, without some spiritual Aid from above to vanquish and subdue them. Our Saviour told St. Peter, that *Satan desir'd to have him, that he might sift him as Wheat* (and so he would, if left in his hands) *but I have pray'd for thee* (faith he) *that thy Faith fail not*; Luke 22. 31, 32. meaning, that the Devil fought an advantage against him, and by God's permission would fain try his Skill upon him; he would have the sifting of him to shake his Faith, and make it flee as the Chaff before the Wind: but Christ tells him, that tho' his Danger was great, yet he had pray'd to his Father, and procur'd Strength enough to overcome him, and therefore would have him not only to stand his ground, but to strengthen his Brethren.

Moreover, the Snares of the World, and the Baits of the Flesh would prevail too far upon the best of us, were it not for the daily influence of God's Grace to succour and secure us from them: which shews the great reason we have to pray to God to strengthen them that stand; who would soon fall, should God withdraw his Strength, which alone supports and hold them up. Hence we find St. Paul, who could do nothing of himself, saying, he could do all things through Christ who strengthen'd him. So that to continue their standing, we must continue our Prayers for them; especially considering (as a Father hath observ'd) that the Devil

Devil bends his main Forces against them that stand, to pull them down; knowing that if he can but foil them, the Weaker will fall of course. Beside,

2dly, To presume or rely too much upon our own Strength, is the ready way to provoke God to let us fail, and so he commonly does to those that depend upon their own standing; for *Pride goeth before Destruction* (saith Solomon, Prov. 16. 18.) and *a haughty Spirit before a Fall*. Such Presumption God Almighty often punishes in his own People, by leaving them a while to themselves to make them sensible of their own Arrogance; Instances whereof we have both in the Old and New Testament. *David* upon a signal Victory grew so confident of his own Strength, as to think himself out of all Danger of falling; *I said in my Prosperity* (saith he, Psal. 30. 6, 7.) *I shall never be mov'd, for thou Lord hast made my Mountain to stand so strong.* But God did but a little with-hold the Assistance of his Hand from him, and he soon saw his Error, and found his own Weakness; *Thou hidest thy Face from me* (saith he) *and I was troubled.* St. Peter presum'd so much upon the Strength and Stability of his Faith, that in a high fit of Confidence he told our Saviour, that *if all Men should deny him, yet he would never deny or desert him; yea, that he would rather die than deny him;* Mat. 26. 35, 71, 72, &c. But Christ did but leave him a little while to himself to try his Constancy, and in a short space of time he denied him thrice, and with bitter Oaths and Imprecations said he knew not the Man. Since then our standing is so slippery and uncertain, 'twas good Advice of the Apostle, *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,* 1 Cor. 10. 12. And elsewhere, *let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom, nor the mighty Man in his Strength,* Jer. 9. 23. both which, without God's Grace and Assistance, are no better than Weakness and Folly. By all which it appears, how fit and necessary it is, to pray unto God to strengthen such as do stand, which is the first Petition relating to the stronger Christians, that they may be confirm'd in the Faith, and kept from Apostacy.

The Second relates to those that are weak, viz. that it may please God to comfort and help the Weak-hearted. Whereby the Weak-hearted are meant, such as want Spirit or Courage to encounter their ghostly Enemies, and so instead of resisting are too apt to faint and yield to their Temptations. The Weak-hearted are discourag'd with Difficulties, and

and rather sink under than strive against them ; they are terrify'd with the Wiles and Devices of the Devil, and despair of vanquishing either the Frowns or Flatteries of the World. In a word, they are so nice and tender, as even to sink under the Burden of any Trouble or Affliction, and can hardly bear up under the Pressure of the slightest Trial : *If any Tribulation arise by reason of the Word, by and by they are offended* ; Mat. 13. 21. And this proceeds partly from the Weakness of their Grace, and partly from a natural Pusillanimity of Temper, which like a weak Eye is offended with every thing that comes near it. These are the weak Christians, of whom the Apostle makes so frequent mention in his Epistles : they are sometimes call'd *Babes in Christ, that have need of Milk, and not of Strong Meat*, Heb. 5. 12. being unable to bear it ; whom St. Paul therefore would have us tender of offending. This is a very weak and sickly Disposition of Mind, and is much to be pity'd and pray'd for, wherever it is found. Accordingly our Church here in the Litany puts up a Petition for them, That God would comfort and help the Weak-hearted. Where two things are ask'd of God in their behalf.

1st, Comfort, to cheer and revive their Spirits : and, *2dly*, Help, to support and strengthen their Hearts.

1st, The Weak and Faint-hearted stand in need of Comfort to raise and revive their Spirits ; and therefore God himself commands Comfort and Cordials to be administer'd unto them, saying, *Comfort the Feeble-minded, support the Weak* ; 1 Thess. 5. 14. There is a Feebleness of Mind as well as of Body, and both stand in need of Comfort to uphold and support them : *By Sorrow of Heart* (saith Solomon, Prov. 15. 13.) *the Spirit is broken* ; and a wounded Spirit who can bear ? Chap. 18. 14. While the Spirit, which is the Prop of Body and Mind, remains sound and vigorous, it will easily sustain the Infirmities of both, and charge thro the greatest Difficulties ; but when that is wounded, and the Prop fails, they unavoidably sink into Sadness and Despair. The Feeble-minded are dismay'd at thoughts of their former Failings, and having been foil'd in former Assaults, are apt to think it impossible to bear up against the future ; and so by throwing away their Faith and Trust in God, yield themselves up as a Prey to their Enemies. Now in such cases we are call'd upon to comfort the Weak-hearted, and seek for the Balm of Gilead, to heel such broken Spirits ; that is, to set before them the exceeding great Riches

of God's Mercy, the Largeness of his Promises, his Readiness to embrace and receive them; and with all other strong Motives and Arguments of Consolation to cheer their low and drooping Spirits.

2dly, We are not only to comfort, but to help the weak-hearted; that is, to give them the best Assistance we can, by Ghostly Counsel and Advice, to keep them from falling. But above all, we are to recommend them unto God, who is alone able to make them stand, to beg him to fortify them with his Grace, that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, to enable them to put on the whole Armour of God, that they may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil, having the Loins of their Mind girt with the Girdle of Truth; Eph. 6. 13, 14. that is, with the knowledg of Christ, and of all Divine Truths: And having on the Breast-Plate of Righteousness; that is, an upright and good Conscience, which will defend their Breasts from all Distrust and Misgivings of the Goodness of God, and their Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace, Ver. 15. that they may run with Patience the Race that is set before them, and trample upon all the Lets and Hindrances in their way, without receiving any spiritual harm: Above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith they may quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked, Ver. 16. and the Helmet of Salvation, which is a Hope in God, as the Anchor of the Soul, sure and stedfast: And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, Ver. 17. to repel all Temptations, as our Saviour did, with It is written. These are the best Helps to comfort and strengthen the Weak-hearted, especially if we add to them our constant Prayers and Supplications to render them effectual, Ver. 18. Which is the second Petition here offer'd up in the behalf of weak Christians and new Converts, who are in continual danger of falling, to hold them up as well as we can.

The Third is for those that are actually fallen, and that is, To raise up them that fall. Sin is in Scripture often call'd the Fall of the Soul, and Adam's first Transgression is generally express'd by the Fall of our first Parents; because it cast them down from that first Station of Innocence and Happiness, wherein God had plac'd them: And they that are carry'd away with the Error of the Wicked, are said to fall from their own Stedfastness; 2 Pet. 3. 17.

Now as God is said to be alone able to keep us from falling; *Jude ver. 24.* so is it he only that can raise up them that fall, and lift up those that are down, *Psal. 145. 14. & 146. 8.* We of our selves can neither prevent our falling, nor rise again, being fallen. 'Tis the Grace of God that is alone sufficient for us, and able to do both. And therefore our recourse must be to him by Prayer, for preventing and restoring Grace both for our selves and others.

All that we can do towards our rising, is by Repentance, to be heartily sorry for our Sins, and to turn from them; which being the Condition requir'd of us, to make us capable of his Grace and Favour, we must be careful to mind and perform that, and then we may rest assur'd that God will not be wanting on his part, if we be so wise as not to fail on ours. 'Twill be in vain when we are fallen, to lie in the Ditch (as we say) and to cry *God help!* without taking any pains our selves to get out. No, we must join our own Endeavours to our Prayers, and labour to rise again by Repentance; and then we shall find that help from above, that will set us again upon our legs, and enable us to go on in the ways of Vertue and Holiness.

We read of the Prodigal Son, who had forfeited his Father's Favour by his Extravagance and Folly, and by leaving his Father's House and wasting his Substance with riotous Living, had fallen into extreme Want and Misery; that when he came to himself, he did not sit still bemoaning his Condition and doing nothing, but he arose and went to his Father, and said unto him, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be call'd thy Son, &c.* Luke 15. 17, 18, 19, &c. And by thus returning with a deep Sense and Sorrow for his Sins, was welcom'd by his Father with the dearest Embraces, and was receiv'd and feasted with great Joy.

This is a good Direction how to behave our selves to our Heavenly Father, when we have erred and strayed from him; and that is, to return to him with a godly Sorrow, bewailing our Sins with the Tears of Repentance, and turning from them: And then, tho' we have fallen, he will take us up into the Arms of his Mercy, and enable us to stand upright. Hence the Apostle calls upon Sinners, to *awake out of the Sleep, and rise from the Death of Sin, and Christ will give them Life;* Eph. 5. 14. which is Encouragement enough to pray to him to *raise up them that fall;* the third Petition to be spoken to: for the obtaining whereof, we must proceed to the

Fourth and last Petition ; and that is, to beat down Satan under our feet. The Devil is the Author and Cause of all the Evil and Mischief that befalls Mankind ; he is first the Tempter, and after the Accuser of the Brethren ; first drawing them into Sin, and then into Misery. He did so with our first Parents in Paradise, and he is still doing the same with all their Posterity. He seeks to trip up the heels of them that stand, and makes the Weak to fall, laying traps for both, to cast them down, and to keep them from rising. And therefore we are to set our selves with might and main against this common Enemy of Mankind, and to arm our selves against all his Assaults. But because his Power and Policy is too great for us to vanquish or encounter with our own Strength, we are to call in the Assistance of Heaven to our succour, and to beseech our Saviour to crush and conquer him for us : which we are encourag'd to ask and hope for, from the Promise made in Paradise immediately after the Fall, that the *Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*, Gen. 3. 15. meaning, that Christ the Son of God, who was born of a Woman, should crush the Power of Satan, who first beguiled us ; which he hath effectually done, by dissolving the Kingdom, and destroying the Works of the Devil. But we have a more express Promise to this purpose, Rom. 16. 20. where the Apostle tells us, that *the God of Peace shall shortly bruise Satan under our feet* : meaning, that he shall disarm him of all Power to hurt us, as an Enemy subdued and trod under feet. The Expression was taken from the Custom of the Eastern Conquerors, who were wont to put their feet upon the necks of the Enemies they overcame, and to trample upon their vanquish'd Foes. Accordingly we read of Joshua, that when he had conquer'd the Kings of Canaan, he call'd for all the Men of Israel, and commanded his Captains to come near, and put their feet upon the necks of those Kings, Josh. 10. 24. in token of his compleat Victory over them, and their total Subjection to him.

Now from God's gracious Promise of bruising the Serpent's Head, our Church teaches us to pray him to beat down Satan under our feet, to give us a perfect Conquest of him, and to make that deadly Foe our Footstool.

Our Saviour conquer'd the Devil not for himself only, but for all his Followers, insomuch that tho' he may be per-

permitted to try and tempt us, yet he cannot force us to yield, nor can he do us any harm without our own consent and complying with him: the Sting and Venom of his Temptations are taken out, and if we resist the Devil, the Apostle tells us, *he will flee from us*; James 4.7. But our Warfare here is not fully accomplish'd, nor our Conquest over Satan thorowly finish'd; we are left a while to struggle with our ghosly Enemies, but the time is coming, when our Victory over them will be compleat and ended: *for he must reign, till he hath put all Enemies under his feet*; then shall we be advanc'd above the reach of their Power and Malice, and be perfectly freed from the Assaults of all their Temptations. And because we are promis'd, that Satan our deadliest Foe shall be shortly trodden under our feet, we pray here for the hastning of that time; to which all the People are to say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Thus we see the Sense and Meaning of the Petitions in this Paragraph, which respects three or four sorts of Persons, whose Welfare we are to tender and recommend unto God.

1st then, For the stronger and more confirm'd Christians, describ'd here by *such as do stand*, let us pray for a continual Supply of spiritual Strength, to stablish and settle them, lest they fall by too much Presumption, and miscarry by their own Arrogance and Folly.

2dly, For the more feeble and weak Christians, call'd here *the Weak-hearted*, let us beg of God to help them with the Influences of his Grace, and to comfort them with the Joys of his Holy Spirit, that they fall not into Despair of God's Mercy, nor sink under the Burden of their own Fears and Misgivings.

3dly, For those that are actually foil'd or fallen by any Temptation, let us pray to God for Grace and Strength to raise them again by Repentance. And because not only the worser and weaker sort are subject to these Falls, but even *the Righteous* (as Solomon tells us, Prov. 24. 16.) fall seven times a day; let us all *watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation*: or if we at any time fall, that we may have strength to rise again, and not fall with the Wicked into irrecoverable *Mischief*. To which end,

Lastly, Let us pray God to beat down *Satan under our feet*; for he it is that betrays us into all Evil, and goes about like

like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour : Whom if we resist steadfast in the Faith, we shall e'er long have him under our feet, never more to be foil'd, but for ever triumph over him. In which Request let us all say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XXIII.

1 Tim. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men.

ITreated the last time, by the Direction of the Litany, of the Intercessions to be made for three sorts of Persons, that stand in need of our Prayers, with the Petitions to be put up for them : And they are,

1st, To strengthen such as do stand, lest they fall by any Arrogance or Presumption.

2dly, To comfort the Weak-hearted, lest they fall into Despair.

3dly, To restore the Lapsed or Fallen, that they may rise again by Repentance. To effect which, we beg of God to subdue Satan for them, and according to his Promise to tread him under their Feet.

I come now, as the next Paragraph leads, to the Intercessions to be made for three other sorts of People in these words : *That it may please thee, to succour, help, and comfort all that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation.* The former related chiefly to the Maladies and Infirmitieis of the Soul ; these latter refer to the Distempers and Distresses both of the Body and Mind, as will be seen in the handling of them. In order to which, I shall observe,

First, The Persons here interceded for ; and they are, All that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation.

Secondly, The Petitions put up for them, and they are for Succour, Help, and Comfort ; to which the People say, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

I begin with the Persons here interceded for, viz. all that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation. Which Words have all different senses, and relate to different sorts of Persons. And,

1st, We pray here for *all that are in Danger*. Now Dangers are of several kinds, there are Dangers spiritual, temporal, and eternal: all which being great Calamities, we pray for all that are either actually in, or afraid of them.

(1.) The spiritual Dangers are of falling into Sin, or falling into Error, both which being attended with great Evils and Mischiefs, are to be heartily pray'd against, both for our selves and others. For the Danger of falling into Sin, we are beset with so many Enemies and Temptations, that we are in continual danger of being betray'd and beguil'd by them. The Devil hath many Wiles and Devices to work upon our Weakness; the World hath many Smiles to allure, and many Frowns to affright us from our Duty; the Flesh hath many Baits and Attractives to draw us to the gratifying of it; and our own corrupt and deceitful Hearts have a strong Byass to betray and yield us up into the hands of these ghostly Adversaries. So that we have daily and hourly need to pray to be preserv'd from the Peril and Danger of them.

For the Danger of falling into Errors and Divisions, that too is very great; for *many false Prophets and Teachers are gone out into the World*: and we find by sad Experience, that too many are seduc'd by them. St. Paul fore-warn'd his Followers, that *after his departure many grievous Wolves would enter in among them, not sparing, but devouring the Flock*; and that *some among themselves would arise, speaking perverse things to draw Disciples after them*. Acts 20. 29, 30. St. Peter foretold of some false Teachers in the latter days, that *should privily bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and that many should follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of Truth should be evil spoken of*: 2 Pet. 1, 2. which things are too much verify'd in our days. And because the trying of the Spirits, whether they be of God, 1 John 4. 1. the only prescrib'd Remedy in these Cases, is oft-times above the Capacity of vulgar Persons, we are to implore the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, to keep them from the danger of being deluded by them. But beside these spiritual, there are,

(2.) Some corporal Dangers, such as Sickness and the many Diseases that happen to the Body, which impair its Health,

Health, and take away all the Comfort of Life; there are likewise temporal Dangers: and these are either publick or private. The publick Dangers are those which we bear in common with others, and are inflicted by the just Judgment of God; such are they that proceed from Fire, Famine, or the Sword; to which we know whole Countries are expos'd, and sometimes groan under. The private Dangers are those that beset private and particular Persons, as Afflictions, Losses, Crosses, Disappointments in any kind; to which the best of Men are liable, and are many times expos'd. And these Dangers are either future or present: the future, if foreseen, are commonly fear'd; and the nearer the Danger is apprehended, the greater is the Dread and Fear of it; yea, sometimes the Sense and Smart of it is as sharp and terrible before it comes, as the Blow it self when it lights upon them: but if the Danger is not foreseen, or prepar'd for before it comes, the Surprize adds much to the Sting and Bitterness of the Calamity; and the Fall is so much the more desperate and dreadful, for the not foreseeing the Precipice. For these Dangers, whether foreseen or not, we are to pray to God to prevent them, to give all People a light and sense of their Danger, and to keep them from all that are under any Feats or sad Apprehensions of them.

As for present Dangers, they are such as are actually lighted or fallen upon any, and are not said to be any longer fear'd, but felt; and for these we are to pray for the Removal of them, that God would either take off or lighten the Burden that is upon them. But beside these spiritual and temporal, there are,

(3.) Some eternal Dangers that Men are liable to run into; and they are the Dangers that follow after this Life, and the great Punishments that may beset them in another: and these are to be fear'd and provided against now, that they may not be felt hereafter. And these are the first sort of Persons that we are here directed to pray for, viz. *All that are in Danger.*

The 2d is, *All that are in Necessity.* By these we understand all that want any necessary good things, appertaining to this Life or the next. The necessary good things of this Life with relation to the Body, are Food and Rayment; and they that want these things, are said to be in *Necessity.* And such are the Poor and Needy, whom (as our Saviour tells us) we have always with us.

The necessary good things with relation to the Soul, are Instruction, Admonition, and Consolation. The Ignorant want Instruction, that they may know their Duty, and to be shew'd the way that they should go: The Negligent and Slothful want Admonition, and so are to be call'd upon to go on in the way of their Duty: The feeble-minded and dejected Christians want Consolation, and so are to be comforted and supported under any Distress or Deser'tion. They that are depriv'd of these things, are said to be in Necessity.

The necessary good things for the Life to come, are *the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory*: the former are necessary to direct and assist them in the way to eternal Happiness, the latter to animate and carry them thro all the Difficulties they may meet with in it; and both are requisite to make them hold out to the end of their Race, that they may be guided by Counsel here, and at last brought to Glory. And all that want any of these things, may be truly said to be in Necessity; the second sort of Persons here pray'd for.

The third is, *All that are in Tribulation*: by which we are to understand all that groan under the Weight and Burden of any Evil; which lying heavy upon the Body or Mind, or both, are commonly call'd by the name of Trouble or Tribulation.

Now these Evils (as we before observ'd) are both the Evils of Sin, and the Evils of Suffering: the former being Violations of God's holy and righteous Laws, cannot but afflict the Mind that is conscious of them; the latter being painful and grievous things, cannot but affect the Body that sustains them. And all that labour under the Weight and Pressure of any of these Evils, are said to be in Trouble or Tribulation.

Thus we see the Persons here recommended and remember'd in our Prayers, viz. *All that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation*. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To the Petitions here offer'd up in the behalf of each; and they are three, to succour, help, and comfort, suitable to the Conditions of the three foremention'd Persons: which are,

1st, To succour all that are in Danger.

2dly, To help all that are in Necessity. And,

3dly, To comfort all that are in Tribulation. Of each of which something particularly.

If, We

1st, We pray to God here, to succour all that are in Danger. What those Dangers are, we have in some measure shew'd; namely, the Fears of any spiritual, temporal, and eternal Evils that are hanging over our Heads, and ready to light upon us, tho the Particulars of them are too many to be recounted. Now to succour, is to afford some Relief to such as labour under the fear or feeling of any of these Miseries. Hence our Saviour having suffer'd himself, is said to be able to succour them that are tempted, Heb. 2. 18. Meaning, that he having a Sympathy or Fellow-feeling of our InfirmitieS, by what he himself hath suffer'd, hath Bowels of Pity and Compassion enough to succour and relieve us under Temptation. And this is what we beg of him in the behalf of those that are under the fears of any such approaching Trials, to wit, that he would be pleas'd to pity and succour all that are in such Dangers; and if the Danger be imminent or near at hand, and ready to fall upon them, that he would vouchsafe to interpose for their Rescue, to take hold of them, and snatch them as Fire-brands out of the Fire. This his Almighty Power is able to do in the greatest Extremity, for there is no Danger too near or too great for him to avert, who is able to save upon the Brink of Ruin. And his infinite Goodness makes him as willing as able to do this for us, if we duly depend upon him: for he is faithful that hath promised (saith the Apostle) and will not suffer us to be tempted or tried above what we are able, but will with a Temptation, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

1 Cor. 10. 13. An instance hereof we may have in Abraham, Gen. 22. 2, 12, 13, 14 whom God for the trial of his Obedience, commanded to sacrifice his only and dearly beloved Son: and finding him willing upon his command to do it, when he was just about to sacrifice him, God Almighty order'd to stop his Hand, and provided him another Sacrifice to save his Son; which being done upon Mount Moriah, it became proverbial upon any rescue from an imminent Danger, to say, *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* But yet because God Almighty hath declar'd, that he will be sought to for these things, our Church teaches us to beseech him to succour and appear for the Relief of all that are in Danger; which we have abundant Encouragement to ask, from his Ability and readiness to grant. But our Prayers for these things must be seconded with our Endeavours in their behalf: not that

he wants our Assistance, but to see our Sincerity, and because he is ordinarily wont to work by Means and second Causes; therefore we are to give them the Aid and Succour of our best Counsel and Advice, and to do our utmost to prevent or avert their Danger. *Phoebe* is commended by St. Paul, Rom. 16. 2, for being a *Succourer of many* in their Dangers and Distresses. And if we are not wanting on our part, by affording the best Succour we can in such cases, God will not be wanting on his, to answer our hearty Prayers for them, and *give them Succour in his due time*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And this is the first Petition here offer'd up, which is, *To succour all that are in Danger.*
The

2d is, *To help all that are in Necessity.* Now the Necessities are partly those of the Body, as the want of Food and Rayment, and other necessary Preservatives of human Life; and partly, the Necessities of the Soul, as the want of Knowledg and right understanding our Duty; as also the want of Grace in the Heart, and spiritual Strength to resist and overcome Temptation. These are great Necessities, which too many labour under.

To help them in these Necessities, is to supply all their Wants, and to furnish them with all those good things, of which they stand in need for that purpose. Thus to help in bodily Necessities, is to feed the Hungry, to clothe the Naked, to harbour the Stranger, to visit the Sick, to heal the Distressed, and the like: which things belonging to the Power and Providence of God, from whom all good things come, we are (as our Church teaches us) to recommend those that need them to his Care and Bounty; and the rather, because God hath taken the Poor into his particular Care and Protection, he is their more especial Friend and Patron, and hath charg'd his Providence with their Support; *The Poor (saith he) shall eat and be satisfied*, Psal. 22. 26. But yet he doth not now feed them by Miracle, or in any extraordinary way, but he hath made the Rich the Stewards and Dispensers of his Bounty, to provide for them; he hath charg'd their Estates with this High-Rent and Acknowledgment, which he hath made payable to the Poor and Needy, the withholding whereof is a great piece of Injustice and Ingratitude to our Maker, which will have a sad Reckoning or Account to be made for it: so that we must not only pray to God, to help them that are in Necessity, but we must reach out our

Hand

hand to help them in some measure our selves; this is requir'd and expected of us, without which our praying to God in their behalf will be look'd upon as a mocking of him, and prove no better than an Abomination to him. 'Tis not good Wishes, nor good Words, no nor good Prayers neither, will avail any thing without good Works: for St. James asks, If a Brother or Sister be naked or destitute of daily Food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be ye marm'd and filled; and notwithstanding give him not those things that are needful for the Body, what doth it profit? James 2. 15, 16. Meaning, that it brings no Profit either to him that gives such good Words, or to him that hears them; for neither is the Body of the one, nor the Soul of the other benefited by such Prayers. In short, to make good our Petitions for thole that are in any bodily Wants or Necessities, we must add our Acts of Charity for the supply of them; and then our Prayers will bring down showers of Blessings upon their Heads, or else return with Blessings into our own Bottom.

And as we are to pray to God to help and relieve Men in their bodily Wants and Necessities, so are we to desire Relief for the Necessities of their Souls; that is, that God would enlighten their Minds with the Knowldg of Divine Truths, that they may be preserv'd from Ignorance and Infidelity; that he would rectify their Wills and Affections, to receive and embrace them; and to regulate their Lives and Actions according to them; in a word, that he would give Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from them that stand in need of them. Which is the second Petition here put up, viz. To help all that are in Necessity. The soul stands in much greater danger in Tribulation.

3d is, To comfort them that are in Tribulation. Whereas the foremention'd Dangers and Necessities related chiefly to the Bodies and Souls of Men, so these latter of Tribulations more especially refer to their Substance and good Names; for the Injuries and Abuses that Men sustain in their Estates and Reputations, are most commonly sti'l'd by the Name of Tribulations. And that these are frequently the Lot even of good Men in this World, both Revelation and Experience plainly shew us; for through many Tribulations (saith the Apostle) we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution. 2 Tim. 3. 12. And sad Experience confirms this even in the best of Men, who meet here

here with many Tribulations, and are often persecuted by the Hands and Tongues of the Wicked. Now to comfort them that are in Tribulation, is to suggest to them such Arguments of Consolation, as may be sufficient to bear them up with Patience under all their Troubles; yea, 'tis to administer to them Cordials strong enough to raise their Spirits, and to make them rather to rejoice, than to repine at their Tribulations: which Arguments are taken from the Nature, End and Issue of such Trials; which are only to exercise our Graces here, and to prepare us for Glory; the Cordials are fetch'd from the rich and precious Promises of the Gospel, which are able to take off the Bitterness of any Affliction, and to sweeten the sharpest Trial. This made the Apostles and Primitive Christians not only *not to faint, but to count it all Joy, when they fell into divers Temptations,* and to rejoice that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ; for we know (saith the Apostle) that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together. The Prospect they had of a future Happiness, made them over-look and despise all the Difficulties they met with in their way to it. I reckon (saith St. Paul) that the Sufferings of this present Life, are not worthy to be nam'd or compar'd with the Glory that shall be revealed in us; Rom. 8. 18. For these light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; 2 Cor. 4. 17. With these and the like Cordials, with which the Holy Scriptures abound, we pray God to comfort all that are in any Tribulation; that he would be pleas'd to set home these Arguments of Consolation upon their Minds, that they may not be dismay'd or despond under these short Sufferings, but wait with Patience for that Crown of Glory which will surely attend them. Thus we see the Persons here pray'd for, and the Petitions that are put up for them, to which we say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Let us then, 1st, heartily beg of God to succour all that are in Danger, to step in and prevent the approaching Evil: but then care must be taken, that they run not wilfully into Danger by their own Rashness and Folly; for that will forfeit all Title to Favour, and deprive them of all Succour.

2dly, Let us pray to God to help all that are in any Necessity; that he would pity their Condition, and furnish them with all Necessaries both for Life and Godliness;

ness; and let us put to our helping hand towards their Relief and Assistance.

Lastly, Let us beseech God to comfort all that are in any Tribulation, that he would either remove the Burden, or lighten it so, that they may be able to bear it. And let us administer the best Comfort and Cordials we can for the Support of their Spirits, that they may run with patience the Race that is set before them, till they obtain the Prize that is set at the end of it; to which God Almighty bring us all, &c.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all Men.

HAVING in that part of the Litany I last discours'd of, pray'd in general for *all that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation;* and shew'd the Succour, Help, and Comfort implor'd for all that labour under any of those Miseries: I come now, as the next Paragraph leads, to speak more particularly of some Persons, that are most liable to those Dangers and Distresses; for the Litany rests not in Generals, but descends to Particulars, in these following words: *That it may please thee to preserve all that travel by Land or by Water, all Women labouring of Child, all sick Persons and young Children, and to shew thy pity upon all Prisoners and Captives.* Where we have a Catalogue of sundry sorts of Sufferers, who are all expos'd to many great Hazards and Difficulties, and so come under the first Rank of those before-mention'd, viz. of those that are in danger. And because each of the particular Persons stand in continual need of the Divine Succour, the Church teaches us here to pray God particularly to *preserve* them. And this we should be the more especially mindful of, because (as one hath well observ'd) the Persons here reckon'd up, are hinder'd from coming to the publick Congregation, to join with others in praying for themselves. They that *travel by Sea*

Sea or Land, want Time and Place for so doing; *Childbearing Women and sick Persons* are hinder'd from the Prayers of the Church, by Infirmitie's of Body; and *young Children*, by Incapacity of Mind; and *Prisoners and Captives* are kept from God's House by Restraint and Durance: So that it must be an Act of great Piety and Charity, to remember those in our solemn Prayers to God, who cannot come to the publick Assemblies of the Church to pray for themselves. And this we are here directed to do,

First, For all that travel by Land or by Water. These we find particularly mention'd in most of the antient Liturgies of the Church, wherein Travellers, both by Sea and Land, were recommended to the Care and Providence of God in the early days of Christianity. Some have thought (as a learned Person hath told us) that the first occasion of putting Travellers into the publick Prayers of the Church, was from the Apostles and others travelling both by Land and Sea into sundry Parts of the World, to propagate Christianity, and to preach the Gospel to all Nations; which being a Work of great Hazard and Difficulty, and requiring great Diligence in moving up and down to distant Places, they were thought fit to be minded in the publick Devotions of all good Christians: And from thence the Custom of praying for all that travel upon that, or any other lawful Occasions, hath been deriv'd down, and continues in the Church to this day. And this is done with very good reason, for no Persons are expos'd to more or greater Perils and Dangers, than Travellers both by Land and Sea. The Hazards and Dangers of both are so well known and felt too by many, that they need not any long Rehearsal.

Travellers by Land, you know, are in danger of losing or being put out of their way, and so of wandering and being bewilder'd in Night and Darkness, if they are in their right way, they are in danger of Thieves and Robbers, who deprive them of their Money and Goods, and sometimes of their Lives too. They meet sometimes with Floods and high Waters, that put them in danger of drowning; they are subject to Falls, which endanger Life or Limbs; they are liable to great Heat and Cold, to Hunger and Thirst, with many other Dangers and Disasters that happen in Journies. St. Paul, in the Catalogue of his Sufferings, reckons up his Journing often, in which he was

was in perils of Waters, in perils of Robbers, in perile by his own Countrymen, in perils by the Heathens, besides many other Perils among false Brethren. 2 Cor. 11. 26.

Travellers by Sea are in danger of being taken by Pirates and Privateers. They run great hazards from Storms and Tempests, in which many suffer Shipwreck; they are subject to split against the Rocks, or to be swallow'd up in Quicksands, with many other Risks, which Seamen, and all that travel by Water, continually run. Hence St. Paul, in the foregoing Account of his Sufferings, tells us, that in his Travels by Sea he was in great *peril by Water*, that *he thrice suffer'd Shipwreck*, and *that a Night and a Day he was in the Deep*, and in great danger of being swallow'd up by it. In short, the Hazards of the Sea are so many and great, that may well put all good Christians on praying for the Safety of all that are call'd upon it. There is an antient Saying, *Qui nescit orare, discat navigare*; he that cannot pray, let him go to Sea: the Dangers of that will soon draw them upon their knees, and inspire them with Devotion; there being but an inch or two between them and Death, by their Nearness to the Ocean, beside the continual Hazards of Storms and Tempests. Hence we read in the Book of Jonas, that the Mariners in a Storm fell all to calling upon their Gods, whom in a Calm they were too apt to forget. And therefore our Church here fitly teaches us to remember in our Prayers all Travellers both by Sea and Land, that God would be pleas'd to *preserve* and defend them from all the Dangers and Disasters to which they are expos'd; and this, the Sympathy we ought to have for our Fellow-Creatures should prompt us to be ever willing and ready to do.

I know some have vainly, or rather maliciously objected against this Passage of the Litany, as if it were a Prayer for the Safety of all Thieves, Robbers, and Pirates; they being in the number of all Travellers by Sea and Land.

But the Church, which prays for Deliverance from all kind of Evil, cannot be thought to give any manner of encouragement to Sin or Sinners; and therefore this Petition can be only meant of all such as travel upon just and lawful Occasions, for it recommends no other to the Divine Protection: and if Robbers and Pirates may be any way thought to be included in it, 'tis only to pray for their Conversion, that they may avert those Dangers that must otherwise beset them. So that this idle Cavil hath plainly

more

more of Rancour than Reason in it; and still we stand oblig'd to put up this Petition, to preserve all that travel by Land or by Water: to which all the People may and ought to say, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

The Second sort of Persons here pray'd for, relate to the Female Sex; and are, *All Women labouring with Child*. This is call'd by the name of *Womens Travail*, not abroad, but at home; which being attended with grievous Pains and Agonies, they are fitly recommended in our Prayers to God. The Petition we put up for them, is, that they may be preserv'd in the great Pains and Perils of Child-birth; which call for Assistance, as from the Hand of the Mid-wife, so more especially from the Hand of God.

There was a Curse pronounc'd upon the Woman, who was first in the Transgression, that brought Ruin upon Mankind, *That in Sorrow she should conceive and bring forth Children, and yet her Desire should be to her Husband, who should rule over her*. Gen. 3. 16. Her first eating the forbidden Fruit hath entail'd a Curse upon the Fruit of her Womb ever since; by which means, her bringing of others to Life does greatly endanger her own, and bring her oft-times even to death's door. The Prophet *Jeremiah* sets forth the sorest and sharpest Sufferings, by the Pains of a Woman in Travail, and the Anguish of her that bringeth forth her first Child; Jer. 4. 31. And St. Paul describes the sudden coming of Destruction by the coming of Travail upon a Woman with Child, which there is no escaping; 1 Thess. 5. 3. Indeed, the Dangers of labouring Women in bearing, bringing forth, and breeding of Children, are so great, that many sink under the Burden: sometimes, as the Prophet *Isaiah* expresses it, *the Children are come to the Birth, and there is not Strength to bring forth*; Isa. 37. 3. And they that go thro it best, do it with great pains and trouble.

In these sad and heavy Circumstances of their Condition, what can we do better for them, than to give them the assistance of our Prayers, and to recommend them to the Mercy and good Providence of God; beseeching him to spare their Life, to ease their Pains, to remove their Fears; in a word, to give them a safe Deliverance, and to restore them to their former Health and Strength? This, common Charity and Humanity should teach us all to do, in the Hardships of their Pain and Labour. Those of their own Sex, from a Fellow-feeling of their Sorrows, are apt enough to

to pity and pray for them ; neither ought Men to be wholly insensible of the Miseries they undergo ; but rather to compassionate the Throws and Groans of those from whom they receive their Birth.

So that our Church hath religiously consider'd the low and weak Condition of *labouring Women*, and allow'd them a place in her publick Devotion ; which we should therefore seriously and affectionately mind, when we repeat this Prayer : and the rather, because God hath encourag'd us to do so by his gracious Promise, that notwithstanding the Curse, or Sentence pronounc'd against them, *they shall be saved in Child-bearing*, 1 Tim. 2. 15.

Thirdly, Another sort of Persons here recommended in our Prayers, are *all sick Persons* ; or all that are seiz'd with any bodily Distemper, or afflicted with any kind of Sickness. These have been ever minded in all the Liturgies of the Christian Church, nor do we find it omitted or left out in any ; common Humanity teaching all Christians to tender the InfirmitieS and SicknesseS of one another. And our Church, beside this general Prayer in the Litany, hath wisely and piously provided a particular Office or Service for the visiting and praying for the Sick. In which we deprecate all kinds of Evil from them, and supplicate for all manner of Good for them. Most certain it is, that Sickness doth every where await all, even the best of Men ; and there is no Place or Condition of Life, that can exempt any from it. Our SicknesseS begin with our Life, and never end till our Death. The most healthful Persons are still liable to be shock'd by Diseases and Death : there is no Creature that ministers to our Necessities, but may prove an occasion of Sickness ; the Fire, the Water, the Air, the Earth, yea, our very Food may annoy and distemper us. There are innumerable Accidents, that may break our Frame, and alter the strongest Constitution ; and being all thus liable to take our turns in Sickness, we should pity and pray for those that labour under it, that we may have the benefit and comfort of their Prayers, when it shall happen to be our case. *Is any afflicted ?* (saith St. James) *let him pray : Is any sick among you ? let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him ; and the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* James 5. 13, 14, 15. And if they cannot come to the publick Assemblies to pray for themselves, let us offer up

up our Prayers for them, that they may be preserv'd from the Danger of the Enemy, and kept in perpetual Peace and Safety ; that the Sense of their Weaknes may add Strength to their Faith, and Seriousness to their Repentance. Fifthly, we are to ask Patience for them under all their Sicknesses, to prepare them for Death ; that thereby they may have an happy end and issue out of all their Afflictions. These things are to be heartily minded and observ'd by us, as Fellow-Members of the mystical Body of Christ ; that as in the natural Body if one Member suffer, the rest suffer and sympathize with it, so we should feel one another's Pains, and endeavour by Prayers and other good Means to deliver each other from them.

Fourthly, We are farther taught to pray for young Children, who for want of Ripeness of Reason and Judgment are unable to pray for themselves. Of these our Saviour shew'd a tender Regard, for he commanded them to be brought to him, and check'd those that would have kept them from him ; he embrac'd them in his Arms, put his Hands upon them and blessed them, saying, *Of these is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And sure if these are the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven, they ought to come within the compass of our Devotion and Charity. Hence we find our Saviour, who is stil'd the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World, charging St. Peter by the Love that he bore him, not only to feed his whole Flock, but more especially to feed his Lamb's ; that is, to take care of the young and tender, as well as the strong and well-grown Christians : meaning, that as we are to be mindful of instructing and promoting the Good of the latter, so we must not forget to teach and pray for the former. And that because young Children are expos'd to many and great Dangers of Body and Soul, which for want of the free Use of Reason they can neither apprehend or avoid. In their Bodies we know they are subject to many Accidents and Misfortunes both by Fire and Water, and stand in great need of our Care and Counsel to escape them. In their Souls they are liable to far greater Dangers, by bad Principles and evil Examples ; their tender Age makes them capable of bad Impressions, as well as good ; and according as they are form'd and moulded at first, so do they commonly live and act after. *Train up a Child (saith Solomon) in the way that he should go,* and

and when he is old he will not depart from it. Young tender Twigs may be bent any way, but old or well-grown Oaks are sturdy and inflexible. If we instil good Principles betimes into young Children, if we use them to their Prayers, and pray for them, inuring them to Goodness, and bringing them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord ; they are likely to prove towardly and virtuous in the After-course of their Life. But if we leave them to themselves, without due Instruction, Discipline and Devotion ; they will soon suck in those bad Principles, that will lead them into all manner of Vice and Error : they will let loose the Reins to all unbridled Lusts, and run into all Excess of Riot. Which shews what great care is to be taken of the good Education of young Children, upon whom the Comfort of Parents, their own Welfare, and the Hopes of the next Generation depend. And because all our Care will avail but little without God's Blessing, we are often to implore that in their behalf, and to recommend them to God in our Prayers : to which all good Men should say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

Fiftly, Another sort of Persons to be pray'd for, are all Prisoners and Captives, mention'd in the last Clause ; *And to show thy Pity upon all Prisoners and Captives.* The first Occasion of putting these into the Litanies of the antient Church, is by learned Men thought to have its rise from the heavy Persecutions of the first Christians under their Heathen Governors, when they were haled away into Prisons, drove into Banishment, and carry'd captive by their bitter Enemies : And as this for owning and preaching in the Name of Christ, for whose sake they underwent sore Distress and Distress. This made the primitive Christians to sympathize with their suffering Brethren, and to put up their daily Prayers for them, that God would have pity upon them, either by releasing them from their Milery, or by supporting them under it. St. Paul, in the Catalogue of his Sufferings, tells us, that he was *in Prisons frequent, in Deaths oft, and in Stripes above measure* ; 2 Cor. 11. 23. And we read of many barbarous Cruelties exercis'd on the Christians, by the Mothes and Gallies, by Bonds and Imprisonment, by Captivity and Banishment ; which made the antient Fathers recommend their Condition unto God with the most earnest Compassion and Devotion. And tho' those cruel Persecutions are by the Blessing of God happily ceas'd, yet

yet there are still some Prisoners and Captives to be remember'd by us: there are many Slaves and Captives in some parts of the World, that to this day groan under sore and cruel Bondage, which we are not to forget, but to pity and pray for them. *Remember those that are in Bonds* (saith the Apostle, Heb. 13. 3.) *as bound with them; and them which suffer Adversity, as being your selves also in the Body:* that is, have the same Compassion on Prisoners, and the same Sense of their Sufferings, as if you were in the same Condition with them; which, being yet in the Body, may be your own lot. Among other Acts of Charity, our Saviour reckons the visiting of Prisoners to be none of the least; for he makes it one reason of the Sentence of Absolution, pronouncing some *Blessed*, because, *I was in Prison* (saith he) *and ye came unto me*, Mat. 25. 36. and hath made the Neglect of it a Cause of the Sentence of Condemnation; pronouncing some *cursed*, because, *I was sick and in Prison* (saith he, ver. 43.) *and ye visited me not.* And tho our Saviour by his Ascension into Heaven is advanc'd far above our visiting him, yet he accepts our visiting his Afflicted Members in Durance here upon Earth, and rewards it as done to himself; as may be seen in that Chapter. Now the greatest Kindness we can shew to these Prisoners and Captives, is to give them the benefit of our Prayers, to beseech God to release them from Bondage, and to redeem them from their Captivity, or else to comfort and support them under all their Hardships. We read, that *when St. Peter was kept in Prison, Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him*; Acts 12. 5. meaning, that with earnest and importunate Suit they besought God for his Liberty, which was soon after effected.

From this Example the Christian Church hath ever since put Prisoners and Captives into their Litanies and earnest Supplications; beseeching God to shew Pity, and in his good time to deliver them from Imprisonment and Captivity. Some indeed are justly cast into Prison for their own Faults as Debtors and Evil-doers; and for these we are to pray to God, to incline their Hearts to Honesty and Repentance, and to do what in them lies for their Enlargement. But for those who are unjustly imprison'd for the Cause of God and Religion, which are here chiefly meant; for these, I say, we are to besiege the Throne of Grace with hearty Prayers for their Liberty and Deliverance; and all Christian People must say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

†

Thus

Thus we see for whom we pray in this Paragraph of the Litany, and how fit it is to put up the Petitions for them; which we should therefore seriously mind, and heartily join in them, when we hear them rehear'd: which God grant, &c.

DISCOURSE XXV.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all Men.

AFTER a general Prayer for *all that are in Danger, Necessity, and Tribulation*; I consider'd the last time some particular Persons that may be said to be *in Danger*, and so to stand in need of the Benefit of our Prayers: and they were, *All Travellers by Land or by Water; all Women labouring of Child; all sick Persons, and young Children; together with all Prisoners and Captives*. I spake particularly of them, with the proper Petitions to be offer'd up for them.

I come now to some others, who may be truly said to be *in Necessity and Tribulation*, with the Prayers that are to be made for them; and they are contain'd in the following words: *That it may please thee to defend and provide for the fatherless Children, and Widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed*. Where the Persons pray'd for in this Paragraph, are the fatherless Children, and Widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed. The Petitions put up for them, are, That it may please God to defend and provide for them: of each of which distinctly. For the Wants and Distresses of each call upon us to intercede for them; and God Almighty's undertaking the Defence and Protection of them, abundantly encourages us so to do.

I begin then with the first sort of them, which are *the fatherless Children*; *That it may please thee to defend and provide for the fatherless Children*. By these are meant all such, as by the Death or Decease of Parents are depriv'd of all Comfort, Counsel, or Assistance from them; they are

commonly stil'd Orphans, and have ever had a room in the publick Devotions of the Christian Church. And these are of two sorts : for some are descended of able and wealthy Parents, who being Heirs, inherit their Fathers Estates, and are left with sufficient Substance for their Education and Subsistence. These are not the Persons principally intended in this Petition, as not being in any Want or Necessity ; tho during their Minority they sometimes want good Guardians, to take care both of their Persons and Substance : for they often meet with Trouble and Tribulation from unfaithful Trustees, who oftner imbezzle than improve their Substance. Yea, sometimes they are made a Prey to such Harpies, who devour or swallow up their Estates before they come of age to enjoy them, or else bring in very lame and imperfect Accounts at last ; by which they are highly injur'd and abus'd. Such Persons will have much to answer for at the last Day ; and tho by false Reckonings they may escape the Censure of earthly Courts, they will dearly rue for it at a greater Tribunal. And in the mean time we are to recommend them in our Prayers to the Divine Care and Providence.

But there are other and more fatherless Children, descended of poor deceased Parents, and left destitute of all Care and Subsistence : these are proper Objects of our Pity and Compassion, that are to be remember'd in our Prayers, and to be reliev'd by our Charity. Having lost the best Friend they had upon Earth, they are cast upon the Care of their Father in Heaven, to whose Wisdom and Providence we are to recommend them ; and having none to instruct and provide for them, they are next under God cast upon the Charity of the Publick, to do these good Offices for them. In a word, we are to commiserate their poor helpless Condition, and to do what we can to help them out of it.

But our Church here puts up two Petitions in the behalf of these fatherless Children ; and they are, to *defend and provide for them* : the one is to preserve them from Evil, the other is to supply and furnish them with all Good.

1st, I say, we pray God to *defend the Fatherless*, and to preserve them from all Evil, to which their helpless Condition renders them too obnoxious. They are subject to many Sins, and liable to many Sufferings ; their Poverty may tempt them to reach out their hands to Stealing, and to open their Mouths in murmuring and complaining : and there-

therefore Agur prays against Want, *lest being poor, he should steal, and take God's Name in vain*; Prov. 30. 8, 9. Again, fatherless Children are liable to many Injuries and Sufferings, they are apt to be despis'd and abus'd, to be wrong'd and oppress'd, and therefore stand in great need of our Prayers and Assistance: which we find holy David often giving to them, saying, *O Lord defend the Poor and Fatherless, and see that such as are in need and necessity have right*; Psal. 82. 3, 4. Again, *Deliver the Out-cast and Poor, and save them from the hands of the Ungodly*. And this he found God Almighty ever ready and willing to do for them; for *the Lord helpeth them to right that suffer wrong* (saith he, Psal. 146. 7, 9.) and *feedeth the Hungry*; *the Lord preserveth the Strangers, and is the Defender of the Fatherless*: *as for the way of the Ungodly, he turneth it upside down*. Yea, God stiles himself the Patron and Protector of the Fatherless, and forbids any wrong to be done to them: *Ye shall not afflict* (saith he) *the fatherless Child*; *for if ye in any wise do so, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their Cry, and my Wrath shall wax hot against you; and I will kill you with the Sword, and your Wives shall be Widows, and your Children fatherless*. Exod. 22. 22, &c. Again,

2dly, We pray God not only to defend, but to provide for Orphans or fatherless Children. This he hath likewise promis'd, stiling himself *the Father of the Fatherless*, Psal. 68. 5. oft-times doing that and much more for them, than their earthly Parents were able to do. He pronounces a Curse upon all that do them wrong, Deut. 10. 18. and executeth Judgment for the Fatherless, to give them Food and Rayment, Chap. 27. 19. and to provide for them all the Necessaries of Life. He delights in the Title of being the Judge of the Fatherless, Isa. 1. 17. and makes it a great part of pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father, to visit and relieve the Fatherless in their Affliction; James 1. 27. So that 'tis not only a Duty to pray for them, but such a one too, as he is well pleas'd with the performing it, and takes it well to recommend those to his Care, that are so dear to him.

Secondly, To the Fatherless we are to join the Widows in our Prayers, as God himself doth in his Care and Concern for both. The same Stroke of Providence that makes the Children fatherless, makes the Wife a Widow; and both, by losing the Head that took care of them, are left in a *desolate and wretched state*. O 2 s as how as wobt helpless

helpless and forlorn Condition. And as these are generally put together in Holy Scripture, so we may not put them asunder in our Petitions for them; for as they both stand in need of, so may we ask for them the same things: and therefore our Church here begs the same Protection and Provision for Widows, that it does for Orphans, saying, *That it may please thee to defend and provide for the fatherless Children and Widows.* They are both liable to the same Wants and Injuries, and so need the same Care and Provision to be made for them. Accordingly we find Orphans and Widows commonly join'd together in all the antient Offices of the Christian Church.

Widowhood, especially in the Female Sex, deprives them of all the Benefits and Comforts of Wedlock, and commonly leaves them in a helpless and disconsolate state; which justly intitles them to our Pity and our Prayers. St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. 5. spends almost a whole Chapter about the Carriage and Care that is to be taken of Widows. Where he distinguishes between ordinary Widows, that have lost their Husbands, and Widows indeed, that have neither Husbands, nor Children or Nephews to afford them any Relief; but being destitute of all Help, have none but God to trust to, whom they address to with daily Prayers and Supplications. Now those that are such, the Apostle would have more particularly to be respected and reliev'd; *Honour Widows* (saith he, ver. 3, 4.) *that are Widows indeed.* But for such as have Children or Grandchildren, let them be reliev'd by them whose Duty it is to support them, that the Church be not burden'd. Neither would he have any *Widows taken into this number*, ver. 9. (that is, of those that are to be maintain'd by the Church) *under the Age of Threescore, having been the Wife of one Man:* But the younger Widows (saith he, ver. 11.) refuse; for they may either help themselves by Labour, or relieve themselves by marrying. So that 'tis the aged, infirm, and devout Widows, to whom we are directed to afford the Relief of our Prayers and Charity; not the younger Widows who wax wanton, and neglect that Devotion and Strictness of Life, which the Infelicity of their Condition requires of them. These are to be admonish'd, and the other to be reliev'd.

In a word, Widows and Orphans are God Almighty's peculiar Care; he espouses their Cause, being a Husband to the Widow, as well as a Father to the Fatherless; and would

would have both defended from Wrong, and provided for with all Necessaries. This he taketh well at our hands, and will lay an Engagement upon him to help us in any Extremity: and this we should the rather do, because we know not how soon it may be our own case. Our own Relatives may be reduc'd to the same forlorn Condition; and what we do for others now, will be remember'd and repaid upon the like occasion. Wherefore let us not forget these Orphans and Widows in our Prayers, but administer the best Counsel and Comfort we can in all their Distresses; and then God will not forget our Labour of Love, in ministering to the Necessities of his indigent Servants.

Thirdly, Another sort of Persons here recommended to our Prayers, are all that are desolate. By which we are to understand not only the Fatherless and Widows, but all others that are friendless and harbourless, all that are left alone heavy and comfortless, destitute of Friends and Neighbours, living in a solitary, retir'd and melancholy Condition, having none near to converse with, or to help or comfort in any Exigence. This is indeed a distress'd and deplorable State; David complains of it, and prays against it, saying, *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery;* Psal. 25. 16. Now Desolation is in Scripture sometimes apply'd to Places, and sometimes to Persons. The Desolation of Places is the utter ruining or laying them waste either by Fire, Famine or the Sword: thus desolate Cities are describ'd by the Prophet Isaiah, to be *Cities wasted, without Inhabitants, and the Houses without Men, and the Land to be utterly desolate; where Men are remov'd far away, and there is a great forsaking in the midst of the Land.* Isa. 6. 11, 12. Thus Jerusalem was said to be a Desolation, when one Stone was not left upon another, Luke 13. 35. and their Houses became desolate, and a Prey to their Enemies, for not knowing the things of their Peace, nor considering the Day of their Visitation; Chap. 19. 43. Thus the Prophet Jeremy complains of the Desolation of Zion, that she was become solitary as a Widow, that her Feasts were forsaken, her Gates desolate, and her Children carried into Captivity; as we read in the first Chapter of Lamentations. For these we find the Psalmist often praying, saying, *O be favourable and gracious unto Zion, build thou the Walls of Jerusalem, and turn again the Captivity of thy People;* Psal. 51. 18.

The Desolateness of Persons consists in being left in a lonely, helpless, and friendless Condition. David describes it in his own Person, saying, *I look'd on my right hand, and saw there was no Man that would know me; I had no Place to flee unto, and no man car'd for my Soul*; Psal. 142. 4, 5, 6, 7, &c. In this heavy Condition, he cried unto the Lord, and said, *Thou art my Hope and my Portion in the Land of the living; consider my Complaint, for I am brought very low. O deliver me from mine Enemies, and bring my Soul out of Prison, that the Righteous may resort unto my Company.* The like Petitions our Church wills us to offer up for

Bios αριστος *state;* for a Life without Friends, is to be reckon'd rather Death than Life, being destitute *αριστος.*

of all the Comforts of Life, and antedates the Solitude and Miseries of the Grave. They that are such, are proper Objects of our Pity and our Prayers, to which we are encourag'd by God's recommending them to us, with a Promise of his caring for the poor and destitute, and stiling himself a Helper of the Friendless.

Fourthly, The last sort of Persons here pray'd for, are those that are oppress'd; *All that are Desolate and Oppress'd.* Now Oppression is the dealing too hardly or unjustly with Inferiours, the wringing or crushing the Poor and Needy. Of this kind are the with-holding of Servants Wages, the over-reaching of any in Bargains, the perverting of Justice by Bribes, the exacting from any more than is due, and the like. Against which, God hath given many strict and severe Charges: *Thou shalt not oppress an hired Servant* (saith he, Deut. 24. 14, 15.) *that is poor or needy, whether it be of thy Brethren, or the Stranger that is in thy Land; at his day thou shalt give him his Hire, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee. Let no Man go beyond or defraud his Brother in any matter, for the Lord is the Avenger of all such,* saith the Apostle, 1 Thess. 4. 6.

The Precepts against Oppression are so numerous, and so well known, that 'twould be endless as well as needless to repeat them: we are often bid to relieve, but never to oppress the Poor; yea, we are commandied where it lies in our power, to prevent and keep off Oppression, *to undo heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free.*

The Evils of Oppression are so many and great, as may well deter all considering Men from it: nothing is more grievous

grievous and provoking unto God, than the grieving and oppressing his People. We read what heavy Judgments he laid on *Pharaoh*, for the heavy Burdens he laid on the *Israelites*, and how he recompens'd the Cries of the Oppressed with the Groans of the Oppressor. And we find him after angry with the *Israelites* for falling into the same Enormity ; for *when he look'd for Righteousness, behold Oppression*, Isa. 5. 7. which occasion'd the denouncing of many Woes against them in that Chapter, and in Chap. 10. 1, 2. *Wo be to them that make Widows a Prey, and rob the Fatherless.* How distasteful this Sin is unto Men, we may learn from *Solomon*, who tells us, that *Oppression makes even a wise Man mad*, Eccles. 7. 7. It deprives Men not only of their Patience, but of their Understanding too, and is one of the greatest Injuries that can be done to any. In short, to oppress another is most directly opposite to that Golden Rule of *doing as we would be done by*; for 'tis the doing that to another, which of all things in the World we are most unwilling should be done to our selves. And therefore all that fall into the hands of Oppressors, and groan under the Burdens of cruel Taskmasters, are to be pity'd and pray'd for by us. Where it is in our power, we are to relieve them ; where it is not, we are to recommend their Condition unto God, who heareth the Cries of the Needy, and delivereth the Poor from him that is too strong for him.

Thus we see the Persons here pray'd for, which are *the Fatherless and Widows* ; who being depriv'd of the Comforts and Supports of Life, are cast upon the Providence of God, and the Care of the Wealthy, to whom he hath committed them : as also *all that are desolate and oppress'd* ; that is, all such as are destitute of Friends, and devour'd by Enemies. We see likewise the Petitions, that we are to offer up in their behalf, *viz.* that God would *defend and provide for them* ; of both which they stand in extreme Necessity ; for neither can the Orphans and Widows succour themselves from the hands of the Violent, nor the Desolate and Needy secure themselves from the Teeth of the Oppressor : and therefore God, who hath taken them into his Protection, hath commanded us to defend them from both, and not only to preserve them from Evil, but to provide for them all necessary good things. He hath laid it upon us as a Duty, to *relieve the Oppressed, to judg the Fatherless, and to plead for the Widow* ; Isa. 1. 17. And hath made it

a part of our Religion, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, James 1. 27. without which all other Pretences to Religion are vain and bootless. 'Tis made the Character of a good Man, that he hath neither oppress'd or spoil'd any by Violence, but hath given his Bread to the Hungry, and cover'd the Naked with a Garment, and hath taken off his hand from the Poor : Ezek. 18. 16. And good Men have comforted themselves in this as a token of Sincerity : *I deliver'd the Poor that cry'd (saith holy Job, Chap. 29. 12, 13, &c.) and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him ; the Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caus'd the Widow's Heart to sing ; I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, and a Father to the Poor.*

From these many Precepts, back'd with large Promises of Reward, let us pray heartily for the Fatherless Children and Widows, and all that are desolate and oppress'd : and from those good Examples, let us learn to go and do likewise. And to these Requests, let all the People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord. Amen.*



DISCOURSE XXVI.

1 TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men.

HAVING in the foregoing parts of the Litany made Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions for the sundry Ranks and Degrees of Men, from the highest to the lowest ; and put up Petitions suitable to their various Circumstances and Conditions, from the Prince upon the Throne, to the Beggar upon the Dunghill : lest any should be forgotten or omitted, the Church adds a general and comprehensive Petition that must extend to and take in all Mankind, in the next Words : *That it may please thee to have mercy upon all Men.* Where we are taught a generous and universal Charity, not to confine our Prayers and good Wishes to a few, or to any select Number or Party, but to enlarge them to all Mankind, and to exclude none from the Benefit of our Devotion and Charity.

'Twas

'Twas the Fault of the *Pharisees* to confine all their Offices of Kindness and Charity to their own Sect and Party ; for they would *salute only their own Brethren, and do good to none but such as did good to them.* They stil'd others the People of the Earth, fit only to be despis'd and trampled on ; and counted themselves the only Darlings and Favourites of Heaven, that were alone worthy of their Prayers or Regard. But our Saviour rebuk'd this narrow and scanty Charity, as a contracting of the Bowels, and will'd his Disciples to enlarge them to all Mankind : *If ye love them (saith he) that love you, what Reward have ye ? do not even the Publicans the same ? And if ye salute your Brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not the very Publicans so ? Mat. 5. 46, 47.* This is a sort of mercenary and huckstering Love, that is to be found in the worst of Men, who place their Benefits there where they may have them again with greater advantage, and serve a Party only to serve their own Honour and Interest ; which is not to love our Neighbour, but our selves. But our Saviour would have our Love more general, and grounded upon better Principles, as we may see at large in that Chapter. Again,

We read the like of the *Samaritans*, that they restrain'd all Acts of Kindness and Civility to their own Country-Men, and made those of their own Sect and Religion the sole Objects of their Benevolence and Courtefy ; they would scarce shew the way to a *Jew*, or perform the common Offices of Humanity and Hospitality to any Stranger. Hence we find, that when our Saviour was passing thro a Village of the *Samaritans*, they refus'd him and his Disciples all manner of Reception and Entertainment, because *his Face was as tho he would go to Jerusalem* ; *Luke 9. 52, 53.* The *Samaritans* Place of Worship being upon Mount *Gerizim*, they hated any that took *Jerusalem* for the only Place of Worship, and resorted to it, as the *Jews* did ; for which reason there was no Commerce between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, but rather an Antipathy and Animosity between them. This our Saviour likewise rebuk'd in them as opposite to the true Spirit of Christianity, and quite contrary to that Temper and Disposition of Mind, which he came to plant in them ; which was a general Love and Kindness for all Mankind, and a Readiness to assist, to pray, and to do all good Offices for one another.

Moreover, we read of the *Donatists* and *Cathari* of old, that they also confin'd all Acts of Religion and Civility to their own Sect, and would scarce shew any Favour or Charity to any other: yea, a learned Author hath told us, that they upheld their Separation from the Catholick Church, by this narrow and contracted Charity; for they would employ none in any Business, but such as would espouse their Opinion; nor should any find the Encouragement of any Place or Office, till they had engag'd in their Cause, and shew'd their Forwardness to promote it: and so kept up their Party by restraining their Religion and Commerce wholly to themselves. This was condemn'd by our Saviour in the *Pharisees* and *Samaritans*, and the same was condemn'd by the antient Fathers in the *Donatists* and others, as a restraining of that excellent Grace of Charity, which should extend to all the World, within the narrow Limits of a Sect or Party.

The same Temper and Designs are too visible in the Sectaries and Dissenters of our time, who propagate and increase their Divisions by this Artifice of a contracted Charity; which contracts their Affections to their several Parties, and by confining all good Offices to them, destroys that universal Love and Good-will we ought to bear to all Mankind: this is too plain in our daily Experience, to need any proof. But our Church here and elsewhere teaches us better things, *wiz.* to enlarge our Hearts in good Wishes and Prayers for all Mankind; beseeching God to have mercy upon all Men. Where we manifest our Charity (as we ought) to all People; and tho it be not in our power to supply all their Wants, yet we recommend them to the Divine Bounty, that is able to do for them more than we can ask or think. To do this, we have many Precepts and Examples in Holy Scripture, and both back'd with many Arguments to persuade to it.

For the first, the Precepts for tending the good of all Men are scatter'd up and down in the Book of God, but more especially in the New Testament; for this Lesson of universal Charity was principally taught by our Blessed Saviour, and is almost the peculiar Duty of the Christian Religion: *As we have opportunity* (saith St. Paul) *let us do good unto all Men*, Gal. 6. 10. And we cannot do them a greater good than to pray to God for them in all their Wants and Necesities; who being all God's Creatures, the Prophet makes it a forgetting of God, to neglect to

pray

pray, for them : God forbid (saith Samuel) that I should sin against God, in ceasing to pray for you ; 1 Sam. 12. 23. And tho St. Paul prefers the Household of Faith, or the Members of the Church, to be chiefly remember'd in our Beneficence and Prayers, yet he would not have any others forgotten in our Addreſſes to our Maker.

And for this we have the Examples of good Men in all Ages. In the Jewish Church, Philo the Jew tells us, that the High-Priest was wont to pray for all Mankind ; and in the Christian Church, this Petition was never omitted in any of its publick Offices : which Practice was grounded upon, and warranted by this Exhortation of the Apostle, *Let Prayers and Intercessions be made for all Men.*

And there is good reason for it, for all Men are ally'd to each other by Affinity of Nature, having the same Faculties of Body and Mind, and the same immortal Soul to actuate both ; they all come from the same Heavenly Father, for *in this the Rich and the Poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all* ; Prov. 22. 2. They are all equally descended, as coming all out of God's hand, and having the same high and heavenly Extraction : yea, they come all from one Blood, and derive their Being from the same earthly Parents ; for *Adam* was the Father of us all, and *Eve* the Mother of all Living. So that when we do good or pray for any other, we do it in effect for our selves, and only cherish our own Nature ; all Men being but so many Streams issuing from the same Fountain, so many Branches sprouting from the same Stock, and but one and the same Substance multiply'd into many Persons. And from this Affinity of Nature and Consanguinity of Blood, we may see abundant reason to take in all Mankind within the compass of our Devotion and Charity. So that we see how fitly the Litany here teaches us to pray to God, to *have mercy upon all Men.*

Now all Men here pray'd for may be reduc'd to two Heads ; namely, all those that are yet out of the Christian Church, and all those that are actually receiv'd within the Pales of it.

Of the first sort are all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks ; who take up a great part of the known World.

Of the second sort are all baptized Christians, who are receiv'd and admitted to all the Privileges of Christ's Church. These comprise all *Christendom*, or all the Parts of the Christian World. And both these include the whole World,

World, or the whole Race of Mankind, who may justly claim a share in the Prayers of all God's People. And,

1st, Our praying for all Men includes all such as are as yet out of the Church, as all Jews, Mahometans, Infidels, and all the Heathen World; for these our Church intercedes not only in general here in the Litany, but more particularly in the Service for Good-Friday, in these words: *O merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks, and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.* Where we pray, as we ought to do, for the Conversion of all Mankind, and those especially that sit in Darkness and in the Regions of the shadow of Death, that they may be turned from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God: and to this end, that God would remove that Blindness of Mind, that Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of his Word, which are the main Hindrances of their Conversion. This is desir'd likewise in that Petition of the Lord's Prayer, wherein we say, *Thy Kingdom come;* which is a Prayer for the enlarging of Christ's Church and Kingdom, by the Accession of the Gentile and Heathen World, who are Strangers and Enemies to it; and that God would bring in and unite to his Flock, all those that are yet erring and straying from it like lost Sheep. This we are all oblig'd to do, not only by the common Tye of Humanity, which teaches us to wish well to all Men; but by the Command of God, who requires us not only to wish well, but, as we have Opportunity and Ability, to do good unto all Men: which we cannot better do, than by our Prayers to God to bring them nigh that are afar off, and from Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, to make them the Children of God, and Heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. These things we are to pray for in the behalf of all those, that are as yet out of the Church; and we are encourag'd to ask them, from God Almighty's declating, that he desires not the Death of a Sinner, but is willing that all Men should be saved, and come to the knowledg of the Truth; I Tim. 2.4.

zly, Our praying for all Men refers chiefly to all that are in the Church; for tho we are bid to do good and pray for all Men, yet we are bid to do so more especially for them that are of the Household of Faith, Gal. 6. 10. that is, for them who by Baptism are admitted into Christ's Family, and made the Members of his mystical Body the Church. So we are taught in the Service for Good-Friday, to pray God graciously to behold his Family, for whom Christ was content to be betray'd, and to suffer Death upon the Cross: And that God, by whose Spirit the whole Body of the Church is govern'd and sanctify'd, would receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer for all Estates of Men in his holy Church, that every Member of it in their Vocation and Ministry may truly serve him. To these we are ally'd not only by the common Tye of Humanity, but by the Bond of a more heavenly and spiritual Relation: Christ hath call'd us his Brethren, his Members, and hath made us Members one of another; which should beget in us the greater Endearments, and give us a more especial title and share in one another's Prayers, rejoicing in one another's Welfare, and doing all we can to promote it.

But all Men in the Church are not alike, for some are sound Believers, that act and live up to what they profess; others are only nominal Christians and Professors, having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof. The Church is sometimes compar'd to a Field, that hath Tares and Weeds, as well as Wheat and good Corn; sometimes to a Net, that incloses bad Fish as well as good. There is no visible Church upon Earth so pure, as to be wholly free from all bad Members; that is the purest, that hath the least or fewest of them: but all have some, and therefore as all have need of our Prayers, so are we to extend them to all, both Good and Bad. The Good want strengthning and confirming Grace, that they may grow and persevere in Goodness to their Lives end; the Bad want restraining and renewing Grace, to amend and reform them, that they may see their Errors, and turn from their evil Ways. 'Tis the sole privilege of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, to be presented pure and without spot: the Militant part of it here upon Earth hath many Enemies to encounter, and many Temptations to overcome; both which will be too hard for us without the Assistance of Divine Grace, which we are therefore to seek for by diligent Prayer both for our selves and others. So that our Church fitly teaches

us to put up this Petition, That it would please God to have mercy upon all Men, for they all stand in need of pardoning Mercy and affliting Grace ; the one to remove the Guilt of former Offences, and the other to prevent future. For the best of us have neither Merit nor Power enough of ourselves to deserve or do either : we all depend upon Mercy, and none can be safe or happy without it ; for should God be extreme to mark all that we have done amiss, and deal with us according to the Rigour of strict Justice, there is none of us that would be able to abide it ; the best would be so far from being justify'd, that they must necessarily fall into the severest Condemnation. And therefore we cannot do a better Work for Mankind, than to crave Mercy at God's hands for all Men, and to be easy and favourable in our Judgment of one another.

Thus we see the Sense and Reason of this Petition, in which we should all heartily join, and say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* Wherefore, to draw to a Conclusion,

Let us not contract our Bowels or our Prayers within the narrow compass of a Sect or Party, but let us extend both unto the whole World, and enlarge our Devotion as wide as our Charity, even to all Mankind. We see they all deserve our Prayers, upon the Relation they all have to God, as his Creatures ; and they all need our Prayers, by reason of their Inability to help themselves, and ours to help them any other way.

Let us therefore beg of God, to have mercy upon all Men, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. There are none so high, as to be out of the reach of Troubles and Misfortunes ; and by recommending them unto God, we may assist them in Business, and protect them from Injuries : And there are none so low, but may be rais'd and receive benefit by our Prayers. Indeed there is no Time or Condition of Life, wherein this Duty may be thought either unseasonable or unserviceable ; for it helps to comfort and support in Adversity, and likewise to sanctify and bless in Prosperity : 'tis useful in Health, to preserve and prosper our Affairs ; and 'twill stand us in stead in Sickness and the Hour of Death, to prepare and relieve us in both. And therefore thus to communicate and do good, we should forget not, for with such Sacrifices (saith the Apostle) God is well pleased ; Heb.13.16. By this we not only implore, but imitate the Divine Goodness ; it makes us like unto God,

and that will make both our Persons and our Prayers acceptable to him. *God is loving to every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works;* and he would have us to shew our Love to all Men, by praying for them. He desires the Salvation of all, and is well pleas'd with our desiring the same from him. In a word then, let us become humble Suiters at the Throne of Grace for Mercy upon all Men, and that they may be all mindful of the Conditions upon which alone it is to be had: So shall we give God the Glory of all his Mercies, and our selves receive the benefit of one another's Prayers; which God grant, &c.



DISCOURSE XXVII.

I TIM. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men.

ITreated in my last of that universal and extensive Charity, that is to be learnt and practis'd by all good Christians, consisting in doing good, and praying for all Men. But lest any should think that Enemies, or those that hate and persecute us, are excepted out of this general Rule, and excluded from the Benefit of our Prayers; our Church, in the next Paragraph of the Litany, shews that we are to make no such Exception in our Religious Offices, but to extend our Devotion and Charity even to our bitterest Enemies; teaching us to remember them in our Prayers, saying, *That it may please thee to forgive our Enemies, Persecutors, and Slanderers, and to turn their Hearts.* Where we are to consider,

First, The Persons interceded for; and they are all *Enemies in general, and Persecutors and Slanderers in particular.*

Secondly, The Petitions put up in their behalf; and they are, *1st,* For their Remission, that it may please God to forgive them. *2dly,* For their Conversion, and to *turn their Hearts.*

I begin with the Persons here interceded for; and they are,

1st,

1st, All our *Enemies*; by which we are to understand all that bear any ill-will to us, and seek all occasions to do us ill Offices. Our Saviour stiles them, *those that hate us*; Mat. 5. 44. that is, such as harbour any Malice in their Hearts, or hatch any evil Designs against us, lying as it were at the catch, and watching for opportunities of doing us mischief. These may be justly reputed in the number of Enemies, tho perhaps they may want Ability or Opportunity of wreaking their Spleen, or executing their Malice against us. And so false Brethren may be reckon'd Enemies, who secretly intend and contrive Evil under a disguise of Friendship.

2dly, To our Enemies are added *Persecutors*, who are our more open and profess'd Enemies, which publickly hurt or injure us in Body, Goods, or Name. These are describ'd by our Saviour in the fore-mention'd place, to be such as *despitefully use and persecute us*. Now Persecution is sometimes taken so largely, as to include all kinds of Injuries and hard Usage, especially if pursu'd with rigour, and prosecuted without rest. And so all causeless Sufferings inflicted by Men in Power, as the unjust spoiling our Goods, or invading our Lives and Liberties, and other Acts of Violence and Injustice, may be term'd Persecution: in this Tense all Oppressors, all unjust Infringers of our Rights, and Invaders of our Substance, may be reckon'd Persecutors. But Persecution, more strictly and properly taken, signifies the suffering for a good Cause, as for Righteousness sake, or for the Name and Cause of Christ. Thus the Sufferings of the Apostles and primitive Christians under their Jewish and Heathen Governours, for their owning and preaching in the Name of Christ, are justly stil'd Persecution. In this strict sense, none but such as inflict Penalties for the sake or cause of Christ, are term'd Persecutors: but we are to understand the word here in the largest sense, for all that exercise any Acts of Cruelty or Injustice, that inflict Penalties without any just, or for a righteous Cause. These come under the name of *despiteful Users and Persecutors*.

3dly, Another sort of Enemies here mention'd, are *Slanderers*; call'd by our Saviour such as *revile and curse us*, and *speak all manner of Evil of us*; Mat. 5. 11, 44. And with these the World doth but too much abound, who seek to undermine one another, sometimes by secret Whispers and Backbitings, which are as the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness; and sometimes by open Slanders and Calum-

Calumnies, which are as the Arrows that fly by day, and wound in the sight of the Sun. Indeed Evil-speaking is almost as common as speaking, and too many shoot out their Arrows, even bitter words, taking away Mens good Name, to gratify either a talking or a malicious Humour, and murdering their Reputation, by the invisible Darts of Envy and Detraction. Some employ their Wits in inventing false and evil Reports, and others spend their Time and Malice in venting and spreading them abroad, and both oft-times do very great and incurable Mischief ; for the Plaister seldom or never reaches as wide as the Wound, and so must necessarily leave a Scar behind it : and therefore such as these may be justly reckon'd in the number of our greatest Enemies.

Thus we see the Persons here interceded for, which are all *our Enemies* in general, who wish us any Evil in their Hearts ; and more particularly all our *Persecutors*, who do us any Evil with their Hands ; and likewise all *Slanderers* and *Backbiters*, who work us any Evil with their Tongues. Now these, one would think, should be rather the Objects of our Hatred and Aversion, than of our Love and Devotion ; and if they had all the Wrongs, Slanders, and Abuses they have offer'd to others, return'd upon themselves, they had but their Deserts, and were justly serv'd in their own kind : this Men are apt to say and think in such Cases, and too many act accordingly. But our Church here teaches us a quite contrary Lesson, *viz.* not to hate, but to love our Enemies ; and instead of railing and rebelling, to bless and pray for our Persecutors : for this we have the express Command of our Saviour, *I say unto you, love your Enemies ; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you : Mat. 5.43, 44.*

But, *Secondly*, What are the Petitions we are to put up in their behalf ? Why ! they are these two :

1st, That God would forgive them. And,

2ly, That he would turn their Hearts ; of which briefly. And,

1st, We pray God to forgive our Enemies, that is, to pardon their Enmity and Ill-will towards us, together with all the evil Effects of their Hatred in slandering and persecuting of us. But to clear up this Point of forgiving of

Enemies, I shall premise a few things for the better understanding of it. And,

(1.) To pray God to forgive our Enemies, supposes and requires us first to forgive them our selves ; for 'tis absurd to ask that of another, which we are not willing to do our selves : and therefore we must first empty our Hearts of all Rancour and Resentment, and purge our Soul of the whole Leven of Malice and Wickedness ; we must lay aside all Thoughts and Desires of Revenge, and be in perfect Charity with our Enemy, before we presume to ask God to forgive him : for else with what face can we go about to reconcile him to God, to whom we are not reconcil'd our selves ? Or how can we pretend to breathe out the gentle Spirit of Forgiveness with our Mouth, when we retain nothing but Vengeance in our Hearts ? This is to mock God, and to deal deceitfully with Men, which is an high Affront and Indignity offer'd to both. Again,

(2.) To pray God to forgive our Enemies, supposes not only the forbearing of Revenge, but the actual doing of all the good Offices of Kindness and Charity. This St. Paul teaches us in the 12th Chapter to the *Romans*, where after he had caution'd them against Revenge, as a thing appertaining to God only, he puts them upon all the Acts and Demonstrations of Love and Kindness : *Therefore if thine Enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him Drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head* ; Ver. 19, 20. not to consume, but to melt them into Compassion and Friendship. Without this, to pray God to forgive our Enemies, is to shift off our Duty upon him, without doing any thing on our part ; 'tis to relieve an Adversary with empty words, saying (as St. James speaks) to a hungry or naked Person, *Depart in Peace, be thou fed, and be thou cloth'd, and yet give not those things that are needful to the Body* ; Jam. 2. 15, 16. What do such vain Compliments profit ? or who is the better for such airy Charity ? Whereas by forgiving of Enemies we discard the Enmity, and must after reckon and treat them as Friends, by doing them all the good Turns we can, and contributing to our utmost to the Good of their Souls, Bodies, Estates, and good Names. And when we stand thus affected towards our Enemies, we may then recommend them in our Prayers to God for his Mercy and Pardon ; and having forgiven them our selves, may heartily desire him to forgive them also.

To this we are encourag'd, not only by the Precept, but by the Example of our Blessed Saviour, who thus pray'd for his malicious Enemies, and beg'd Mercy and Pardon for them, even when they were exercising the greatest Acts of Cruelty upon him ; saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* Luke 23. 34. So did the first Martyr St. Stephen, who, when his Enemies were stoning him to Death, cry'd to Heaven, saying, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge ;* Acts 7. 60. The same was done by our Royal Martyr King Charles the First, who not only forgave, but pray'd for his Murderers, that God would stop the Cry of his innocent Blood, and let them know the things that belong'd to their Peace.

But here it may be ask'd, What then, must we make no distinction between Friends and Foes ? Must we treat them both alike, and be still doing Good to them, that are still wishing and doing us Evil ? In answer to this, I say,

1st, The Precept is general, *Do good to all Men*, from which we are not to exclude our greatest Enemies, since our Saviour himself hath included them ; saying, *Love your Enemies, and do Good to them that hate you.* But yet, I say,

2^{ly}, That Christianity allows some Distinction in our Carriage towards Friends and Enemies : For,

1. It doth not require us to converse much with Enemies, and make them our Intimates, but rather the contrary ; for that would give them the Opportunity of betraying, and doing us the greater Mischief. St. Paul's Advice is, *If any be a Railer, or Backbiter, a Drunkard, Extortioner, Unjust, or the like ; with such a one, no not to eat :* that is, not to have too great Intimacy or Familiarity with such Persons. And elsewhere, *Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes, or the Workers of them, but rather reprove them ;* Eph. 5. 11. Freedom and Familiarity, if they do not extinguish, will inflame Animosities ; and therefore we are better by distance to let them cool and die away, than by Nearnest to add Fuel to keep them alive. Nor yet,

2. To forgive our Enemies, does not suppose or oblige us to trust them, for that is oft-times unsafe and dangerous ; 'tis to put our selves in such hands, as are most likely to betray us : and therefore tho we are to ask mercy for them, yet we are not bound to lay our selves at their mercy : for that would be to shew our Reconciliation, by hazarding our own Ruin ; and to demonstrate our Love to our Enemies, by shewing our Hatred to our own selves.

Our Trust and Confidence is to be put first and principally in God only, and next to him in our best belov'd and approv'd Friends; but for our Enemies, tho we are to pardon and pray for them, yet we are not requir'd to trust them: Nor yet,

3. Does our forgiving of Enemies deprive us of all lawful ways of defending our Lives and Estates from the Violence and Oppression of Invaders. Charity to Enemies does not supersede the Law of Self-Preservation, nor lay us open and unguarded against the Malice and Assaults of them that hate us, for that would make us a Sacrifice or Prey to every insolent Offender; nor does it debar us of a Legal Reparation of great and considerable Injuries by the Methods of Law and Justice, for that would be an Encouragement to all manner of Rapine, Violence, and Oppression. And therefore we must distinguish here between Acts of private Revenge, and Acts of publick Justice; the former are utterly inconsistent with this Duty of Christian Charity, for we cannot pray for or forgive those, against whom we have any Rancour, or Thoughts of Revenge: but Acts of publick Justice are necessary for the publick Good, and the Preservation of Peace, Order, and Government in the World.

We may and ought to pursue our Rights, and repair Injuries, without Malice and Hatred in our Hearts, and with a placable and forgiving Temper; for tho we may not avenge our selves, but rather give place unto Wrath, yet *God, to whom Vengeance belongs*, may either do it himself, or by Magistrates, whom he hath made his *Revengers, to execute Wrath upon them that do evil*. All this is consistent with the Duty of forgiving Enemies; which is the first thing we pray for in the behalf of them that hate, slander, and persecute us.

The 2d is, for their Conversion, or the *turning their Hearts*; that God would be pleas'd to remove all their Malice and Prejudices, that they may not persist in their Enmity and Wickedness against us, but reconcile them to us by the Spirit of Love, Unity, and Concord. None but God, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his hand, can turn their Hearts unto us, and make our Enemies our Friends; which, if we cleave to him with Meeknes and Patience, and forgiving of others, he hath promis'd to do for us: for *when our ways please the Lord (faith Solomon) he maketh our Enemies to be at peace with us*; Prov. 16. 7. And therefore

fore our Recourse must be to him, who is alone able to turn the Hearts of Enemies, and by their Repentance to reconcile them both to himself and us: and therefore we cannot do a better thing both for our Enemies and our selves, than to pray God to forgive them what is past, and to give them his Grace to do better for the time to come; which things are necessary to their Salvation, and are the best Demonstrations of our Charity and Good-will towards them. In short, our Church here teaches us to beg of God the Pardon of all the Injuries done to us by our greatest Enemies, and likewise to turn their Hearts from all Rancour and Malice to Love and Kindness, that they may repent of the Evils done in this World, and be sav'd in the next.

But because this Duty of forgiving of Enemies, and praying for them, is a thing much averse to our corrupt Natures, 'twill be requisite to urge a few Arguments to press it upon us. And,

1. This is a Divine and Godlike Temper, and gives us the greatest Resemblance to our heavenly Father, who is kind to the Unthankful and Evil, and maketh the Sun to shine on the Evil and the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and Unjust. 'Tis a low pitch of Charity and Goodness, to be kind to our Friends and Benefactors, who are wont to repay us with the like again. This the very *Publicans and Sinners*, and the worst of Men could attain to; but to love our *Enemies*, and to do Good to them that despitefully use and persecute us, is a much higher degree of Vertue, and shews us to be the *Children of the most High*. This is to be like unto God, to imitate our Father which is in Heaven, and to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful; which is the highest and noblest pitch of Perfection that our human Nature can possibly reach to. 'Tis the Glory of a Man (saith Solomon) to pass by an Offence; and 'tis a greater Honour to remit an Injury, than to revenge it: for in taking Revenge, a Man is but even with his Adversary; but in pardoning it, he is above him, for 'tis a Prince's part to pardon.

2. As there is more Honour, so there is a greater Pleasure in pardoning, than in returning an Injury: for the one sits easy, the other grates upon the Mind. Revenge, how sweet soever it may seem to choleric and malicious Spirits, does ever prove sour and bitter too in the end; 'tis attended with great Disquiet and Perplexity of Mind;

and brings on unspeakable Miseries both in this World and the next : whereas the pardoning or passing by of Offences is accompany'd with great Calmness and Serenity here, and leads to eternal Peace and Tranquillity hereafter.

3. Praying for Enemies is the best way to remove their Enmity, and to reconcile them both to God and us ; 'tis the likeliest means to turn their Hearts, and to mollify and melt them into Love and Kindness. This remov'd *Esau's* Hatred, when pursuing *Jacob* with Thoughts of Revenge, his Heart was turn'd, and he met him with all the Tokens of Love and kind Embraces. The same overcame the Rage of the *Syrians*, who gain'd that Victory by Kindness, which they could never compass by Arms.

4. The common Bond of Humanity may oblige us to pray for our Enemies, Persecutors, and Slanderers ; for tho' they may bear us some Ill-will, yet still they are our Brethren, ally'd to us by all the Ties of Nature and Religion, and so are intitled to our Affection and Prayers : their Enmity cannot efface their Humanity, they are still Children of the same Father, endow'd with the same Faculties, redeem'd with the same Blood, and born to the same Inheritance with our selves. All which Resemblances should rather endear than estrange us from our greatest Adversaries, and tend more to unite us in the Bonds of Peace and Love, than to divide us in our Prayers and Affections.

5. We should pray for our Enemies, because they stand in great need of our Prayers ; their Enmity to us is their Sin, and the Injuries and Indignities that flow from it, are great Aggravations of their Guilt, which expose them to the Wrath and Vengeance of God : so that they want his Mercy and Pardon, without which their Condition is forlorn and desperate ; and therefore in Charity and Compassion to their Souls, we are to pity and pray for them. And because either they know not, or consider not the Evil of their ways, we should pray for them in the words of our Saviour, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And since the Precept and Example of our Saviour have laid this as a Duty upon us, *God forbid that we should sin against God, in ceasing to pray for them.* Which we should the rather do,

Lastly, Because if our Prayers, thro' their own Default, prevail not for their Conversion and Salvation, they will surely return into our own Bosom : such Acts of Devotion
and

and Charity are highly acceptable and well-pleasing unto God ; and whatever effect they may have upon our Enemies, either to melt or harden them, they will not miss in the end of a glorious Reward. Wherefore to conclude,

Let us heartily put up this Petition in the behalf of all our Enemies, Persecutors and Slanderers, that God would be pleas'd to forgive all their actual and intended Mischief, and accept of our Forgiveness of them as a Means or Motive of obtaining his : And not only so, but that he would turn their Hearts from all Malice and Wickedness, empty their Souls of all Rancour and inordinate Passion, and shed abroad his Love and Grace into their Hearts ; and let all the People say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*



DISCOURSE XXVIII.

I T I M. ii. part of the 1st Verse.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions, be made for all Men.

IN all the foregoing Intercessions of the Litany, we pray chiefly in the behalf of others : as first for our Superiors in Church and State ; next, for our Inferiors in Substance and Station ; and lastly, for our Equals in Nature and Circumstances ; together with all Sorts and Conditions of Men, not excepting our greatest Enemies, for all which we are bound to pray.

The two next Paragraphs come more home to our selves, and teach us to pray for our own Welfare : And because we consist of a Body and Soul, and are bound to consult the Good of each, we pray for temporal Mercies, to supply the Wants of the one ; and for spiritual Blessings, to answer the Necessities of the other. In which our Church hath follow'd the direction of our Saviour, in that absolute and perfect Form of Prayer, which he gave to his Disciples : wherein are two Petitions for our selves, the one respecting the Health and Sustenance of our Bodies, in these Words, *Give us, this day our daily Bread* ; the other, the Safety and Happiness of our Souls, in these, *Forgive us our*

Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. In like manner, in this compleat and comprehensive Form of Prayer in the Litany, we have two Petitions for our selves to the same purpose; the one, for the temporal good things of this Life, for the Welfare of the Body, *viz.* To give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth: the other, for the spiritual good things of the Life to come, for the Salvation of the Soul, *viz.* To give us true Repentance, to forgive us all our Sins, &c. of which particularly. And I shall treat at this time of the first, contain'd in these Words; *That it may please thee to give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them.* In which words we may easily observe these two things:

First, A Prayer for a Blessing upon the Fruits of the Earth: Give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth. And,

Secondly, The End and Design of this Petition, that we may reap and receive the Benefit of them in their proper Seasons, so as in due time to enjoy them. I shall speak something to each of them in their Order. And,

First, We have here a Prayer for a Blessing upon the Fruits of the Earth; Give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth. Where we desire God first to give these necessary Fruits, and then to preserve them to our Use. By the former we own God to be the Giver of all the Fruits of the Earth; and indeed so we ought, for every good and perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights; James 1. 17. Of the first Grant of these Fruits, we read in Gen. 1. 29. where God said to Adam and his Posterity, *Behold, I have given you every Herb bearing Seed, which is upon the Face of all the Earth, and every Tree in the which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed, to you it shall be for Meat.* This was the first and most innocent Food of Mankind: hence some have thought, and perhaps likely enough, that no Flesh was eaten till after the Flood; when God enlarg'd his Grant unto Noah, saying, *Every living thing that moveth shall be Meat for you, even as the green Herb have I given you all things;* Gen. 9. 3. We read of some of the antient Philosophers and stricter sort of Christians, that wholly abstain'd from Flesh, and would use no other Food than Herbs, and the Fruits growing out of the Earth.

Earth. But others with greater probability have thought, that the Fruits of the Earth, by which all living Creatures are sustain'd, include in them all other kinds of Food, that are agreeable to Nature and fit to be eaten. And this Opinion and Use of them hath obtain'd in all Parts of the Christian World, and is abundantly confirm'd by those words of the Apostle; *Every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refus'd, if it be receiv'd with Thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.* 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. And elsewhere, *Whatsoever is sold in the Shambles, or is set before you at a Feast, eat; making no question for Conscience sake, for the Earth is the Lord's and the Fulness thereof: and this he hath given to the Children of Men.* 1 Cor. 10. 25, 26.

God Almighty then is the Giver of all the Fruits of the Earth: *He bringeth forth Grass for the Cattle, and green Herbs for the Service of Man; he maketh Food to grow out of the Earth, even Corn, and Wine, and Oil; and the Earth is fill'd with the Fruit of his Works;* Psal. 104. 14, 15. This David acknowledges at large throughout the Book of Psalms: *Thou visitest the Earth, and blessest it* (saith he, Psal. 65. 9, 10, 11.) *thou makest it very plenteous: thou preparest their Corn, and so providest for the Earth; thou waterest her Furrows, and sendest Rain into the little Valleys thereof, and blessest the Increase of it, &c.* *He maketh Peace in our Borders, and filleth us with the Flower of Wheat;* Psal. 147. 14. *He giveth Rain from Heaven and fruitful Seasons* (saith the Apostle, Acts 14. 17.) *filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.* This is a Truth acknowledg'd by all Persons, Jews, Heathens and Christians, who in all Times and Ages have look'd up to Heaven, and own'd God as the Giver of all these earthly Blessings; yea, it hath been a Custom from the beginning to offer unto God the first Fruits of all his Creatures, as a token of Gratitude and Acknowledgment, that we receive from him all the rest. The Jews were not permitted to eat Bread, or parch'd Corn, or green Ears, until they had brought their Offering of them unto the Lord; Lev. 23. 14. And we read, that the Gentiles likewise did the same to their Idol Gods; they made Presents of Corn to Ceres, and Oblations of other things to the several Deities from whom they thought they receiv'd them. The primitive Christians offer'd their First-fruits upon the Altar; and generally all Nations have consented in this, in taking God to be the Giver of all good things, and the Author of all our Blessings.

The

The truth is, there is not a Shower descends, but bids us to look up to God as the Fountain from whence it comes. The Sun never shines upon our Head, but it directs our Contemplation to the great Father of Lights, that gives it all its Light, and guides all its Motion ; neither can either, or both of them together, make one Ear of Corn, or one Blade of Grafs to grow, without the Influence of the Divine Blessing. And therefore the Church here fitly teaches us to pray to God to give us the Fruits of the Earth, which are all at his command, and he alone can give them. We may not ascribe them to our own Industry, or think them the Fruits of our own Labours ; neither may we attribute them to the Influences of the Heavens, the Virtue of the Weather, or Efficacy of second Causes : for all these, without the first, can produce nothing, nor yield us any Fruit ; much less may we impute them to our own Wit or Worth, as if we could claim them by way of Merit, or deserve them at God's hand ; for this is to rob God of the Honour of his Mercies, and to provoke him to withdraw his Blessings from such unthankful Wretches, who will not know or own from whom they receive them. But to obtain our Request for these and all other Mercies, we are to ascribe them wholly to his Bounty and Blessing, to look up to him as the sole Giver and Disposer of them, and upon all occasions to seek only to him for the Supply of our Want of them, and of all the necessary Means of attaining them. And therefore our Church hath piously order'd Prayers to be put up for Rain and fair Weather, and other necessary Means of Blessing the Earth, as Occasions require ; that we may receive the Fruits of the Earth in due season, to our comfort, and God's honour, to shew our sole Dependence upon him for these things. And this is agreeable to the Prayers and Practice of all Christian Churches in all Ages, who have ever pray'd for a Blessing upon the Fruits of the Earth ; and to that end, for temperate Air, gentle Showers, refreshing Dews, and seasonable Weather, that the Earth may bring forth kindly Fruits, and the Year be crown'd with Goodness ; as may be seen in the Liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, and many others : all which are founded upon that Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Give us this day our daily Bread* ; which includes in it not only the Staff of Bread, but all the necessary Supports of human Life.

And as we beseech God to give us the kindly Fruits of the Earth, so, 2dly, We pray to him to preserve them to our

Use :

Use : by which we own God to be not only the Giver, but the Preserver of these things to us. The Fruits of the Earth, after they are sprung up, are liable to many Accidents and Misfortunes, that may deprive us of the Use of them : they are subject to many Casualties in the Field, before they come to any Perfection ; they may be scorch'd by the Sun, or burnt by Fire ; they may be drown'd by Floods, or pined by Drought ; they may be devour'd by Caterpillars, or destroy'd by Cattel, or other hurtful Creatures ; they may be over-run with Weeds, or blasted by Mildews, with many other Mischiefs that may hinder their Growth, and defeat the most promising Hopes of the Husbandman. And when they are come to full maturity, there may be many hazards at the Harvest, by excessive Rains and unseasonable Weather, that may spoil the Fruits, and frustrate the Expectations rais'd from them. Moreover,

When they are safely hous'd and brought into the Barn, they are liable to many Dangers, as to be devour'd by Mice and Vermin, to be consum'd by Fire, with many other Casualties, that may take from us the Use and Enjoyment of them. And therefore we pray God not only *to give*, but *to preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth* ; for 'tis he alone that can grant and secure them to us. We read of the antient Heathens, that they had several Deities, that presided over their several sorts of Fruits, whom they invok'd and worship'd to preserve them from all Accidents. But these were feeble and impotent Deities, that could neither give or preserve any Blessings to them. Whereas we serve an Almighty and Ever-living God, that is able to do more than we can ask or think, and gives us all things freely and richly to enjoy. And this leads me to the

St. Aug. de
Civ. Dei.
lib. 4. c. 21.

Next Thing to be consider'd, *viz.* the great End and Design of our praying for, and God's giving us the Fruits of the Earth : and that is, that we may enjoy them in due season ; for so the Litany teaches to ask them, *so as in due time we may enjoy them*. Enjoyment is the End of all the Husbandman's Labour, and is the Expectation of all that depend upon it. And indeed the reaping some Benefit, and enjoying some Comfort, is the Design of all other Callings and Employments. *Who will shew us any good ?* is the general Cry of the World ; and all Men propound it to themselves

selves in all their Undertakings. The Merchant ventures to Sea, and exposes himself to the Dangers of Storms and Tempests, in hopes of a gainful Return. The Soldier takes the field, and runs the hazards of Battels, in hopes of Victory and Succes. In like manner, the Husbandman plows in Hope, and sows in Hope, and undergoes the Difficulties of Wind and Weather in expectation of a plentiful Harvest: and generally all Men are buoy'd up with the Hopes of enjoying something that may recompense their Labour. And all this with the Allowance and Approbation of God himself, who declares *the Labourer worthy of his Hire*: yea, he encourages and blesses the Endeavours of such as labour in an honest Calling, and rewards the diligent Hand with making it rich. Solomon tells us, that *it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the Good of all the Labour that he hath taken under the Sun, all the days of his Life, which God giveth him; for it is his Portion.* Eccles. 5. 18, 19. And he reckons it a Blessing to every one, to whom God hath given Riches and Wealth, to have power to eat thereof, to take his Portion, and to rejoice in his Labour; this is the *Gift of God*. So that our Church fitly puts us upon asking and labouring for the kindly Fruits of the Earth, to this end, that we reap them in their proper time, and *enjoy the Comfort of them in due season*.

But yet we may frustrate this good End, and forfeit the Fruition and Enjoyment of these things two ways:

1st, By the just Judgment of God for the Abuse of his Creatures. And,

2dly, By our own Folly, in depriving our selves of the Use of them.

For the *1st*, When God hath given us the possession and plenty of the Fruits of the Earth, and other good things, we may justly lose the Comfort and Enjoyment of them by our abuse and mis-employing them. God, who gives us the free Use of his Creatures, hath will'd us to be *sober and temperate in all things*; and the Apostle warns us, *whether we eat or drink, to do all to the Praise and Glory of God*; 1 Cor. 10. ult. So that the Use of these things is to be bounded by Temperance and Religion; we may use them to *Chearfulness*, but not to *Excess*. And to use them to other Ends, as to the dishonour of God, and the detriment of our selves, justly incurs the Divine Judgment and Displeasure; who is wont to punish such, either by depriving them of those good things, of which they make so bad

bad a use, or else by taking away all the Sweetness and Comfort of them, if continu'd to them. Sometimes, I say, God punishes the Abuse of his Creatures, by taking them away from such as use them to so ill purposes: *A fruitful Land maketh he barren* (saith the Psalmist) *for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein;* Psal. 107. 34. He breaketh the Staff of Bread, and suffers them to fall into Penury and Want. He stoppeth the Influences of the Clouds, making the *Heavens as Iron, and the Earth as Brass,* Lev. 26. 19. the Land gaping for Rain, and dry'd up for want of Moisture, the Beasts of the Field panting for lack of Fodder, and the Cattel perishing for want of Water. These are sad Calamities, that bring on Dearth and Famine upon a Land, occasion'd by the Intemperance and Excesses of Mens Lives; of which we find the Prophets *Jeremiah, Joel, and Haggai* complaining in their times, and are to be carefully avoided in ours. *Jer. 14. 1, &c. Joel 1. 18, 19, 20. Haggai 1. 9, 10, 11.*

But if God continues his Creatures, as he sometimes does to such riotous and intemperate Persons; yet he deprives them of all the Sweetness and Comfort of enjoying them. He withdraws his Blessing from them, by which means they become sapless and insignificant to them: they serve rather to feed Diseases and Ill-humours, than to cherish and strengthen the Body; and so are a Curse, instead of a Blessing to them. Such as these may indeed possess much, but they enjoy little; finding more of Trouble and Discontent, than of Ease and Satisfaction in what they have. And therefore our Church teaches us here to pray, that God would not only give us the kindly Fruits of the Earth, but that he would so preserve and sanctify them to our Use, that we may in due time truly and properly enjoy them, by tasting the Comfort, and relishing the Sweetness of them. Of which we may be debar'd, not only by God's withdrawing his Blessing for our Abuse of them, but,

2dly, By our own Folly in with-holding them from ourselves, and depriving our selves of the Use of them. Solomon speaks of *an Evil, which he had seen under the Sun;* *A Man to whom God hath given Riches, Wealth, and Honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his Soul of all that he desireth; yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a Stranger eateth it: this is Vanity, and is an evil Disease.* Eccle. 6. 1, 2. Such, he tells us, were common among Men in his days; and some there are in ours, who are poor in the midst

midst of all their Riches, and in the Fulnels of their Sufficiency are in straits, by denying themselves the Use and Enjoyment of what they posses; *Job 20. 22.* This is a strange piece of Folly, amounting even to Madness, for Men to want what they have, and to be Beggars in the midst of Abundance; to be miserable even in Prosperity, and to alienate from themselves their own Estate. "For such a one's Gold (as one hath well observ'd) is no more his, than when it was in the *Indies*, and lay hid in the Mines; his Corn is no more his, than if it were still growing in *China* or *Arabia*; he is no more Owner of his Lands, than he is Master of *Jerusalem* or *Grand Cairo*. For what difference is there, whether Distance of Place or Baseness of Mind sever things from him?" And where is the odds, whether his own Heart or another's Hand detain from him the Use of them? He wants these things as much as he that hath no share at all of them; for instead of giving to him that lacks, he hath no heart to supply his own Necessities. Such as these are said to die in debt to their Belly and their Back, and must leave their Substance to those that will pay it with Extravagance to both. In short, these Persons contradict the End of all God's Blessings, which is, that they should in due time comfortably enjoy them.

Thus I have explain'd to you the Petition here put up for the temporal Food and Nourishment of our Bodies, *viz.* that *God would give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth*; together with the End and Design of God's giving, and our praying for them, *viz.* that we may reap the Benefit, and enjoy the Comfort of them in due season.

It remains then, that we piously and devoutly put up this Prayer unto God, That the Fruits of the Earth may ripen kindly for our Use, and that he would bless us in the due time and manner of enjoying them. We see 'tis God only that can give and preserve them to us: One may plow, and another may sow; one may plant, and another may water; but 'tis God only that gives the Increase. And therefore the Husbandman especially, and such as are more immediately employ'd and concern'd in Tillage, should daily look up to Heaven for a Blessing upon their Labours, without which 'twill be all lost and in vain. And because all Men from the highest to the lowest subsist upon the Fruits of the Earth, since the Scepter is supported by the Plow,

and

and the King himself is serv'd by the Field; we ought all to address to the Maker and Giver of all things, to bleſſe the Labours of the Husbandman, and by ſending ſeaſonable Weather and a plentiful Harveſt to chear the Hearts of all People: in which Petitions they are all to join, and ſay, *We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord. Amen.*



DISCOURSE XXIX.

I Tim. ii. part of the 1ſt Verſe.

I exhort, that Supplications, and Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men.

AFTER a Petition for the temporal good things of this Life, for the Support and Sustenance of our Bodies, of which I ſpake in my laſt; there follows a Prayer for ſpiritual good things, for the Welfare and Salvation of our Souls: of which I am now to treat, from the next Paragraph of the Litany, contain'd in these words: *That it may please thee to give us true Repentance, to forgive us all our Sins, Negligences and Ignorances, and to endue us with the Grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our Lives according to thy holy Word.* Where we have three or four Petitions offer'd up to God for the Good of our Souls; as,

First, To give us true Repentance.

Secondly, To forgive us all our Sins, both Negligences and Ignorances.

Thirdly, To endue us with the Grace of his Holy Spirit. And,

Lastly, To enable us to amend our Lives according to his holy Word: of which particularly. And I begin with the

First, Which is, to give us true Repentance. Where by Repentance we understand a hearty Sorrow and Remorſe for Sins paſt, with full Purpoſes and Resoluſions to forſake them for the time to come. This, St. Paul calls *a godly Sorrow, that worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of;* 2 Cor. 7. 10. 'Tis attended with a Compunction of

of Spirit, whereby, like St. Peter's Hearers, we are pricked at the heart, and cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?* Acts 2. 37. 'Tis such a sore Displeasure with a Man's self for offending God and breaking his Laws, as begets in him a perfect hatred of his Sin, which wounds his Soul with Grief, and pierces his Heart thro with many Sorrows. This is the Nature of Repentance, which consists in a thorough Change of the Mind, by abhorring all that is Evil, and turning only to that which is Good; and so implies in it Confession of Sin, Contrition for it, and Conversion from it.

The first Branch of Repentance is Confession of Sin: He that truly repents of his Faults, will frankly and fully lay them open either to God in publick or private Confession; or to Men, if he hath wrong'd any; or to some godly Person, at whose hands he may receive some Comfort and ghostly Advice.

He that refuses so to do, is not yet sufficiently touch'd with a due Sense and Sorrow for Sin; and so is not arriv'd to the first Step of Repentance, by confessing that he hath done amiss: much less is he come to the second, to feel any Contrition for it; which is the breaking or bruising of the Heart with Grief and Sorrow, conceiv'd for God's just Displeasure at our Sins: and such a *broken and contrite Heart God will not despise.* But there is yet,

3. A farther Step to arrive at Repentance, and that is Conversion; which is a turning from our Sins unto God. This is describ'd by the Apostle to be a *turning from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God;* Acts 26. 18. *Repent and be converted* (saith St. Peter to the obstinate and unbelieving Jews) that is, Be not only sorry for your Sins, but turn from them, which is the best mark and token of your Conversion. And this is the Repentance here intended in the Litany, which is to be, (1.) A total forsaking of all Sin, without any Reserve of Kindness for any darling and beloved Vice. And, (2.) The bidding a constant and perpetual Adieu to them, without ever returning to them any more. And this is here call'd true and unfeigned Repentance, proceeding from a Principle of true Love to God, and of perfect Hatred to every false way; and is oppos'd to a false and feigned Repentance, that proceeds only from the Force or Fear of Punishment, and the Terrors of God's Wrath. Such was that of Pharaoh, which lasted no longer than while the Rod was upon his

his back ; and such was that of *Ahab*, which had the outward Show and Appearance of Repentance, but nothing of the inward Truth and Reality of it. *Judas* likewise repented himself, and brought back the thirty Pieces of Silver, but not from the Hatred of his Sin, but from the Horrour and Anguish of a guilty Conscience ; which made him despair of Mercy, and ended in his Destruction. In opposition to this, we are here minded of a true Repentance, which proceeds from better Principles, viz. a real Detestation of our former evil Courses, and full Purposes of forsaking them, so as never more to return to them again.

This is that true Repentance which we are here taught to pray to God for, and fitly too, for none else can give it, nor is it any other way to be attain'd ; we cannot give it to our selves, nor bring our stubborn Wills to stoop to the Severities of true Repentance. None but God can soften our hard Hearts, or mollify our obdurate Spirits, or work either to a Compliance to his Precepts ; his *Word is the Fire* that must melt them into Sorrow and Submission, and the *Hammer that alone breaks these Rocks in pieces*, Jer. 23. 29. 'Tis God only that can take away the *Hearts of Stone*, and give us *Hearts of Flesh*, that is, yielding, tender, and relenting Spirits : and therefore *David* prays God to *create in him a clean Heart, and to renew a right Spirit within him*; Psal. 51. 10. intimating the changing and cleansing of our Hearts to be a Work of Creation, that belongs to God only ; and the rectifying or renewing our Spirits, to be an Act of Renovation, that appertains only to his Holy Spirit. So that our recourse must be to him (as we are here directed) to grant us such soft and penitent Hearts, as may incline us to turn from the Evil of our Doings, and to obey the Voice of the Lord our God : which is our first Petition, to give us true Repentance.

The Second is, *To forgive us all our Sins.* And this very fitly follows the former, for Repentance must ever go before Remission ; and where true Repentance goes before, there a full Remission will surely come after : for God hath promis'd that these two shall go together, or soon follow each other ; and he is faithful that hath promised. If we confess our Sins (saith St. John) he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness ; 1 John 1. 9. And the Wise-man hath assur'd us, that he that confesseth and forsaketh his Sin, shall find mercy ; Prov. 28. 13.

This is the Condition upon which we are to ask and expect Forgiveness, for God hath made this the Term upon which his Mercy and Pardon is dispens'd, and 'tis great folly and presumption to ask or hope for it upon any other; for God neither can nor will pardon without Repentance: *Except ye repent* (saith our Saviour, *Luke 13. 3.*) *ye shall all likewise perish.* 'Tis great weakness to think that God will violate his own Covenant, or abate or alter the Terms and Conditions of his Mercy; to hope that a slight Sigh or Wish will pass for true Repentance, or that crying to God for Mercy at the last Hour will be sufficient to procure and prevail for a Pardon. To believe or depend upon these things, is to make God a Lyar, and as mutable in the Purposes and Declarations of his Will, as the vain and fallible Sons of Men. Whensoever then we ask for Pardon and Forgiveness, we must be always mindful and observant of the Conditions annex'd to it, upon which it is promis'd; otherwise we may ask and receive not, because we ask amiss. And therefore our Church, in all its Offices wherein Mercy and Forgiveness is desir'd, ever mentions the Terms and Conditions on which it is offer'd, that we may not too far presume and depend upon it. In the daily Absolution, wherein the Minister is empower'd to declare and pronounce to his People the Absolution and Remission of Sins; 'tis only upon the condition of being penitent: and the Grant of it is confin'd only to them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. In the Communion-Service, the Promise of Forgiveness is restrain'd to them that with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him. And in the Lord's Prayer, by which all ours are compos'd, we ask Forgiveness of God upon the Condition of our forgiving of others; saying, *Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* So that all our Petitions for Pardon are founded upon our observing the Terms upon which they are suspended, without which we can have no reasonable hopes of Success.

And as we may not presume upon Mercy without performing the Conditions of it, so neither should we despair of it upon a due Performance of them; but rather ask it in Faith, nothing wavering, and lifting up pure Hearts and Hands without Wrath and Doubting.

Furthermore, we may observe here the Extent of this Petition, which reaches to all Sins, *That it may please thee to forgive us all our Sins;* i.e. to acquit us of all Guilt, and to

to release us of the Punishment due to all our Transgressions, to cancel our whole Debt, and to wipe out all our Score; for one Sin unsatisfy'd for, will bring us under the Guilt of all our Iniquities: *He that keepeth the whole Law (saith St. James) and offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all.* One Leak in a Ship is enough to drown the whole Vessel, and one Sin unpardon'd and unrepented of, is sufficient to sink the Soul into the Gulph of eternal Perdition: And therefore we beg of God to forgive us all our Sins, to leave none upon the Score, but to blot out all our Transgressions; to pass by all our Offences both great and small, and to pardon not only all our Sins of Wilfulness and Presumption, but to overlook all lesser Miscarriages, *all our Negligences and Ignorances:* By the first understanding Offences committed for want of Care; by the second, for want of Knowledg: both which, if occasion'd by our own Default, are dangerous and damnable.

1. Therefore, We pray against all Negligences; that is, against all Neglects of Duty, all Sins of Omission and Commission, occasion'd by Carelessness and Inadvertence. If we neglect our Watch, or let loose the Reins to our unbridled Lusts, we expose our selves to Temptations, and may be easily surpriz'd into many Evils. We should therefore watch the wandering of our Thoughts, that they strain not upon Lust, or Passion, or any other Extravagance: So *David hated all vain Thoughts,* and would not admit them into his Mind or Consideration. We have need of a strict Guard upon our Mouth, and to keep the Door of our Lips, that no Evil enter in or come out from them: *I said I will take heed to my ways* (saith holy David) *that I offend not in my Tongue: I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle, while the Ungodly is in my sight;* Psal. 39.

1, 2. *And if any offend not in word, he is a perfect Man,* saith St. James, Jam. 3. 2. which because few or none can attain to, we beg of God to forgive us the Slips and Wandrings of that slippery Member, as also all Offences that proceed from Rashness and want of due Consideration, from the Influence of bad Company, and the Neglect of a good Guard upon our Ways and Actions; all which come under the name of *Negligences.*

2. We pray God to forgive all *Ignorances*; that is, all Sins committed for want of Knowledg, or Faults run into thro Error and Mistake; this may somewhat extenuate, tho not wholly excuse a Fault. Our Saviour, in praying

for his Enemies, uses this as a Motive for Mercy, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*; Luke 23. 34. And St. Paul, tho a Persecutor and Blasphemer, yet obtain'd Mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and in Unbelief; 1 Tim. 1. 13. St. Peter, in his Sermon to the Jews, tells them, that in preferring a Murderer before our Saviour, and putting to death the Prince of Life, they knew not what they did; for had they known him, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory: *I wot (saith he) that thro Ignorance ye did it, as did also your Rulers*, Acts 3. 17. *And in the times of Ignorance God winked at*, but now Light is come into the World, *he commandeth all Men every where to repent*; Chap. 17. 30. But tho Light and Knowledg shine out in the World, yet too many walk still in Darkness, mistaking Evil for Good, and Good for Evil; putting Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness: such as these, if their Ignorance be wilful and affected, by neglecting or despising the means of Knowledg, are altogether without excuse; and such Ignorance, instead of lessening, does but increase their Guilt. He that stumbles and falls, by shutting his own Eyes, falls without Pity, by a voluntary Blindness; and they that say unto God, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy Ways*, will be bid to depart from him for ever into outer Darkness. But because, after all our pains in seeking Knowledg, there may be some Slips and Failings by involuntary Ignorance or Mistake, therefore our Church wills us not to forget these in our Prayers, but to beg Mercy and Pardon for all such Ignorances, saying, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* To which end, -

Thirdly, The next Petition is, that it may please God to endue us with the Grace of his Holy Spirit: where, by the Grace of the Spirit, we understand the spiritual Aid and Assistance, added to our natural Powers, whereby we, who can do nothing of our selves, are, by the Divine Power, strengthen'd and enabled to do all things.

To be endu'd with this Grace of the Holy Spirit, is to be assist'd with this Power from above, as our Necessities and Occasions shall require. And indeed this Grace or Divine Power is necessary, to enable us to every good Word or Work: for without it we can say or do nothing, that may be any way acceptable to him; but with it we may be able to perform the whole Will of God, in such a way and

and manner as he will accept of ; for his Grace is sufficient for us, and his Strength is made perfect in our Weakness ; 2 Cor. 12. 9. His enlightening Grace will instruct us in the knowledg of all Divine Truths, and thereby remove all our Ignorances ; his quickning Grace will excite us to all holy Duties, and so prevent all our Negligences ; his strengthning Grace will arm us against all the Assaults and Temptations of our Ghostly Enemies, and make us *more than Conquerors thro Christ that loveth us* ; his restraining Grace will check the Power and Dominion of Sin, so that it shall not reign in our mortal Bodies ; and his renewing Grace will sanctify our Souls, purify our Hearts, and rectify all our Affections, by which means we shall become *new Creatures*, being altogether chang'd and *renew'd in the Spirit of our Minds*. These Graces of God's Holy Spirit are well worthy of our most hearty Prayers and Endeavours to obtain them, and therefore our Church here wisely puts us upon this devout and earnest Petition to be endu'd and adorn'd with them.

Fourthly, The last Petition is, by the help of God's Grace, to amend our Lives according to his Holy Word. Where we may observe,

1. A Duty or Direction given to us, and that is, *to amend our Lives.*

2. A Rule or Pattern by which we are to reform or regulate them ; and that is, *according to God's Holy Word.* For the

1. Amendment of Life is both the Effect of Repentance, and the Cause of Forgiveness ; for we cannot better shew our selves truly penitent, than by amending our Lives ; nor can we better hope for Remission of Sin, than by reforming what is amiss. 'Tis to no purpose to confess our selves Sinners, or to pretend Shame and Sorrow for our evil Courses, unless we firmly resolve to reform and turn from them ; nor can we reasonably expect Mercy without Amendment. To confess our Sins, and still to go on in them, is but a mocking of God, and deceiving our selves ; 'tis asking leave farther to offend him, which will rather provoke than procure a Pardon, and draw upon our Heads a Curse instead of a Blessing. If we have liv'd in any sinful Course, or allow'd our selves in any Transgression against God, our Neighbour, or our selves, we must from henceforth forsake and amend ; that is, we must not only leave the Sin, but turn to the contrary Virtue, for so

Amendment properly signifies, *viz.* a turning from Evil to Good: So that if any have defrauded or gone beyond their Brother in any matter, he must restore what he hath unjustly detain'd, and return to all the good Offices of Justice and Honesty. If any have slander'd or backbited his Neighbour, and thereby injur'd his good Name, they are to do what they can to repair his Credit, and heal the Wounds and Breaches made in his Reputation: If any have allow'd themselves in any Excess of Riot, Lust, or Intemperance, they are not only to abandon the Love and Practice of these Vices, but to turn to the opposite Virtues of Temperance and Chastity. These things are all imply'd in Amendment of Life, which because we cannot perform by our own Strength, we here pray to God for Grace to enable us to do them: And that we may amend our Lives as we ought, we are here directed to the right Rule of Reformation, and that is, God's Word; *To amend our Lives according to his Holy Word.* This is a safe and infallible Rule to act by, that will guide us aright in our way, and bring us at last to our right end: *Wherewithal shall a young Man cleanse his way?* (faith holy David) even by ruling himself after thy Word; Psal. 119. 9. *And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace shall be upon them, and upon the Israel of God;* Gal. 6. 16. The Word of God is a Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths; and to walk by this Light will surely lead us to everlasting Life. There are false Lights that mislead many into contrary Paths; and some talk much of Amendment and Reformation of Manners, that either wilfully or unwittingly mistake the right Method and Measures of both; they are more for mending Religion and Government, than amending their own Lives, and seem zealous for reforming the Manners of others, without any regard to their own; they are for leaving some Sins, and indulging of others, and are forward in some Duties, and negligent in others. These are false Rules of Reformation, and instead of bettering Mens Lives, tend to make them worse: And therefore let us amend, as we are here taught, by the Pattern of God's Holy Word, which teaches us to abhor all manner of Evil, and follow all that is Good; and then we shall not be ashamed, when we have Respect to all God's Commandments.

Thus we see the meaning of this Paragraph of the Litany, wherein we pray for true Repentance, in order to the full

full Remission of our Sins ; and for the obtaining of both, we implore the Grace and Assistance of God's holy Spirit, that we may amend our Lives according to the Direction of his holy Word : To which let us all say, *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord,*



DISCOURSE XXX.

PSAL. IV. I.

*Hear me when I call, O God of my Righteousness ;
thou hast inlarg'd me when I was in Distress :
Have mercy upon me, and hear my Prayer.*

OUR Church having, according to the Apostle's Directions, made Prayers and Intercessions for all Men, particularly for Kings and Queens, and all that are in Authority, together with all sorts of Persons, in what Circumstances and Conditions soever, not excepting our bitterest Enemies : Having, I say, recommended all these unto God, to be supply'd and reliev'd according to their several Necessities, she next appears sollicitous about the hearing and answering of these Petitions, and to that end particularly addresses to the second Person in the Trinity, our Advocate and Mediator, to procure Audience and Acceptance of these our Prayers, and with importunate and reiterated Intreaties implores a gracious Answer : And these are contain'd in those following Ejaculations, *Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us : O Lamb of God, that takest away the Sins of the World, grant us thy Peace.* Which, to shew the great Earnestness of the Suit, is again repeated ; *O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of the World, have mercy upon us ;* with a renew'd Invocation of our Intercessor, *O Christ hear us :* in which the People all join, by echoing back the same words, *O Christ hear us.* In speaking to these things we must observe,

First, The several Titles, Attributes, or Appellations given to our Mediator or Intercessor in Heaven ; and they are, *Son of God, Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World, and Christ, the Anointed of God.*

Secondly, The several Supplications made to him, suited to those Appellations. 1st, As he is the Son of God, we beseech him to hear us. 2dly, As he is the Lamb of God, we beseech him to grant us his Peace. 3dly, As he taketh away the Sins of the World, we beseech him to have mercy upon us. 4tbly, As he is the Christ, or Anointed of God, we again beseech him to hear us.

All which things are included in, or may be infer'd from these words of the Psalmist; *Hear me when I call, O God of my Righteousness; thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy upon me, and hear my Prayer.* Which words, as broken into several pious and pithy Ejaculations in the Litany, shall be the Subject of our ensuing Discourse.

And, First, We address to our Mediator, as the Son of God; and as such we beg him to hear us, saying, *Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.* In which Petition the People being equally concern'd, repeat it again in the same words, *Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.*

And here we must inquire, (1.) In what sense he is stil'd the Son of God. And, (2.) What Force or Influence that Relation may have to engage him, or encourage us, to ask him to hear us.

(1.) Our Saviour is the Son of God, not by Creation, as the Angels and we are, for he was before all Worlds, and the World was made by him; nor by Regeneration, for that implies a new Birth, to be refin'd from the Corruption of the old, which cannot be suppos'd in him; nor yet by Adoption, for that is the incorporating a Stranger into a Family, to which he never before belong'd; which cannot be said of our Saviour, who was always one with the Father. So that there must be some higher and more peculiar ground and reason of this Relation, and that respects both his Human and Divine Nature,

As for his Human Nature, he had no other Father but God; for tho he was born of a Woman in the way of natural Generation, yet it was without the intervention of Man, by the sole Power and Over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost, *Luke i. 35.* which gave him in a more eminent manner the Stile and Title of the Son of God.

As for his Divine Nature, he is the Son of God in a way or manner that none beside him ever was or can be; that is, by an eternal and unexpressible Communication of the Godhead to him, by which he is said to have all the Fulness

of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, Col. 2.9. And being in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery, or Usurpation, to be equal with God; Phil. 2.6. which would be highly so in any other. For which reason he is often stil'd the only Son, and the only-begotten and beloved Son of the Father; John 1.18. This is express'd in the Nicene Creed, by his being God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one Substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. And in the Athanasian Creed he is said to be co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father. And in this highly-exalted and peculiar sense we here invoke him as the Son of God, saying, Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

(2.) But what Force or Efficacy is there in this Relation, to engage him or encourage us to beseech him to hear us? Why, very great. For,

1. As he is the Son of God, he hath all Power in Heaven and Earth, and so is abundantly able to hear and answer our Petitions. The Idol Gods of the Heathens had Ears and heard not, Eyes and saw not, Hands and handled not; and so little relief could be expected from such deaf and impotent Deities. But the Son of God, our Saviour, is truly God, blessed for ever; and so is a most powerful and prevailing Intercessor, that is every way able both to hear and help us: *His Ear is not heavy* (saith the Prophet, Isa. 59.1.) *that it cannot hear*; nor is his Hand shorten'd, *that it cannot save*: but both are open for our Succour and Relief, which is a great Engagement and Encouragement to call upon him to hear us.

2. As he is the Son of God, he is appointed by the Father to be our Priest, to receive and offer up our Prayers; and having graciously undertaken to be our Surety and Mediator, he is as willing as able to hear and help us: and if he be pleas'd to hear us, we know the Father will surely hear him; which is a farther Encouragement to desire him to hear us. To which we may add,

3. That as he is the Son of God and our Saviour, he hath promis'd to hear us; and so beside his Power and Goodness, he hath engag'd his Truth and Faithfulness to lend a merciful ear to our hearty Prayers: *Call upon me in the time of Trouble* (saith God) *and I will hear you*. Now there is no coming to the Father but by the Son; we have all sinned against Heaven and before him, and durst not appear in his presence without a Mediator. But by virtue of

his Mediation, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to obtain Mercy, and find Favour in time of need. If any Man sin (saith St. John) we have an Advocate with the Father, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins; 1 John 2. 1, 2. And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name (saith our Saviour, John 14. 13, 14.) that will I do, that the Father may be glorify'd in the Son. So that we may very well urge thale Arguments, and say, as the Church here directs us, *Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.* Considering,

Lastly, That as he is the Son of God, he is pleas'd to call us Brethren; for he hath adopted us into his Family, and made us also the Sons of God: and being so nearly related, we may rely upon his hearing of us; which is the first Appellation and Request here made to him.

The 2d is by the Title of the *Lamb of God*; and as such, we beseech him to grant us his Peace. This Title of the Lamb of God was given him by *John the Baptist*, who standing with two of his Disciples, and seeing Jesus passing by, shew'd him to his Disciples, and pointing to him, said to them, *Behold the Lamb of God.* John 1. 36.

Now this Title of the Lamb of God was given to him, as some think, for his perfect Innocency and Meekness. A Lamb, you know, is the most harmless and innocent of all Creatures; it often receives, but never does any harm, and so is a fit Emblem of our blessed Saviour, who did no Sin, neither was any Guile found in his mouth: He was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as the Sheep before the Shearer is dumb, so he open'd not his mouth. Isa. 53. 7. But tho the Resemblance in a great measure agrees, and he may well enough be likend to that meek and innocent Creature; yet the true reason of giving him that Title, was taken from the Paschal Lamb, which was slain to make an Atonement for the Sins of the People: which Lamb was to be *without blemish and without spot*, as we read in the twelfth Chapter of Exodus.

Accordingly St. Peter alluding hereunto, declares, *That we are not redeem'd with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot:* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. He alone by the Sacrifice of himself took away the Sins of Mankind, and by it made full Satisfaction for them to divine Justice. With respect to this it was, that St. John usher'd him into the World at his first Appearance with this saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World!* John 1. 29. This

This the Litany here repeats twice with a double Petition; the one, to grant us his Peace; and the other, to have mercy upon us.

1st, We address to him as the *Lamb of God*, to grant us his Peace; that is, the Peace which he hath obtain'd by the Merit and Sacrifice of his Death: and that is a Peace with God, with Men, and with our own Consciences; all which are invaluable Blessings, and worthy of our heartiest Prayers and Endeavours to obtain. And,

(1.) We pray him to grant us the Peace that he hath made for us with God by the Sacrifice of himself. Hence he is call'd *the Lamb of God, that was slain from the Foundation of the World*, Rev. 13. 8. that is, in God's Decree and Determination; it being agreed from Eternity between the Father and the Son, that he should make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and that the Chastisement of our Peace should be upon him; Isa. 53. 5, 10. Accordingly in the Fulness of Time this Lamb of God came to take away the Sins of the World, and to make peace for us; which by his Birth, Sufferings, and Death he actually accomplish'd. By this he hath reconcil'd us to God, and taken away the Enmity that was between us by wicked Works: Being justify'd by Faith, we have peace with God (saith the Apostle, Rom. 5. 1.) thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we were Enemies, we were reconcil'd unto God by the Death of his Son; ver. 10. Hence he is said to be our Peace-maker; for now, in Christ Jesus, ye that were sometimes afar off are brought nigh by the Blood of his Cross: for he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the Middle-Wall of Partition that was between us, and reconcil'd us all unto God by his Cross, having slain the Enmity thereby. Eph. 2. 13, 14, 16. This Peace with God was procur'd by this Lamb of God, who being offer'd up as a Sacrifice for our Sins, became an Atonement to God for us, who thereby from Enemies were made Friends. So the same Apostle told the *Colossians*, Having made peace by the Blood of his Cross, he hath reconciled all things to himself, both of things on Earth and things in Heaven; Col. 1. 20. And therefore we beseech him here to grant us this Peace with God, which he was pleas'd to procure and make for us.

(2.) We pray him to grant us that Peace which he hath made and requir'd amongst Men; for having reconcil'd both Jew and Gentile, and brought both into one Body of his Church, he would have them love and live together as Brethren

thren and Members of the same Body, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, Eph. 4.2. He is the Prince of Peace, not only for making our Peace with God, but for reconciling us to one another. At his coming into the World, the Angels proclaim'd Peace on Earth and Good-will towards Men. And the Religion he after establish'd in it, consisted chiefly in Precepts of Peace and Love, of forgiving of Enemies, and of doing good to all Men; of all which Precepts he himself was the highest and noblest Example.

Now we desire this Lamb of God, who is our great Peace-maker, to grant us this Peace with Men, which he hath made and recommended to us, by rooting out all those black Passions and Designs, that lead to Discord and Dissension; and planting in us those gracious Dispositions, that incline to Peace and Concord with one another.

(3.) We pray him to grant us that Peace of Conscience, which springs from observing his Precepts. This is his Peace too, and proceeds entirely from his Atonement; 'tis an Effect of Peace with God, and is an inward Satisfaction of Mind, arising from an Apprehension of the Favour of God, and his being well-pleas'd with what we do: which cannot but make us easy within, and give Peace and Tranquillity in our own Bosom. *Great Peace have they that keep thy Law* (saith David, Psal. 119.) *and nothing shall offend them: And the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace, of them that make Peace.* James 3.18.

In short, this Lamb of God brought Peace with him into the World, and continu'd publishing and preaching of it during his stay in it; and at his going away, he left Peace as his last Legacy, saying, *My Peace I give unto you:* which is that Peace with God and Men and our Consciences, which he purchas'd by the Merit of his Blood and Satisfaction. And therefore our Church fitly invokes this *Lamb of God to grant us his Peace.* Moreover,

2dly, We beseech him by the same Title, as he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World, to have Mercy upon us.

This Petition hath ever follow'd, upon the Invocation of the Lamb of God, in all the Prayers of the Christian Churches. And with good reason too, for he who hath lov'd us so far, as to sacrifice himself and to die for us, may well be suppos'd to be inclin'd to pity and compassionate our Miseries: and having represented the many Evils

and

and Miseries we groan under, from which we cannot deliver our selves, we may with Faith and humble Reliance upon him, beg him to have mercy upon us.

There cannot be a greater ground and foundation of Confidence in him, than his loving us to the very death, and laying down his Life for us. *Greater Love than this hath no Man* (saith the Apostle) *than to lay down his Life for his Friend:* and yet greater Love than this, hath this Lamb of God shew'd to us, in laying down his Life for his Enemies; for so we all were, till he had remov'd the Enmity by the Blood of his Cross. And after all this, can there be any reasonable doubt of his Readiness to have mercy upon us, upon the terms on which he hath procur'd and promis'd it to us? that is, his Mercy is ready for all penitent and returning Sinners, and no sooner can they confess and forsake their evil Ways, than his Grace will prevent them; for their Pardon is before-hand issued out, and his Arms of Mercy are open to receive them. Otherwise 'tis in vain to ask, and there can be no reason to expect Mercy; for that would be to affront his Justice, which cannot bear the Contempt of his Laws, nor pardon them that offend of malicious Wickedness. So that our craving of Mercy is well plac'd in him, that *taketh away the Sins of the World;* but the Grant of it depends upon our penitent Faith and Reliance upon him.

But here is, 3dly, another Title or Appellation by which we call upon him to hear us, and that is by the Name of *Christ*, or the Anointed of God; saying, *O Christ, hear us:* the People invoking him also by the same Title. In which we put him in mind of that Office to which God the Father appointed and anointed him; which is, to hear and receive our Prayers, and to present them unto him, as their Necessities require: which Office, as our Advocate, he is ever ready to discharge. By this Unction from the Father he is made our Prophet, to teach and instruct us, and to reveal to us the Mind of his Father; our Priest, to make an atonement, and to offer sacrifice for us; as also our King, to rule and protect us. And by all these Offices, which are all imply'd in the Name of Christ, we beseech him to *hear us*; to wit, as our Prophet, to hear and supply the Defects, of our Knowledg, and to inform our Ignorance; as our Priest, to hear and receive our Petitions, and to perfume them with the Incense of his Merits and Satisfaction, that they may come up with a sweet-smelling Savour;

Saviour; as our King, to save and defend us from all Dangers, ghostly and bodily, and to bring us safe to his Heavenly Kingdom.

Thus we see the Sense and Drift of these short and pithy Ejaculations; which like so many Darts shot from devout Hearts, sooner pierce the Heavens, and enter into the Ears of God, than the longer Prayers and much speaking of the Heathen and the Hypocrite. We find them often us'd by the devout Psalmist, from whom these in the Litany are taken, and particularly from the Words of our Text: *Hear me when I call, O God of my Righteousness;* is the same in effect with *Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us:* he being the *Lord our Righteousness,* the Author and Rewarder of all our good Works, and therefore we earnestly desire him to hear our Petitions.

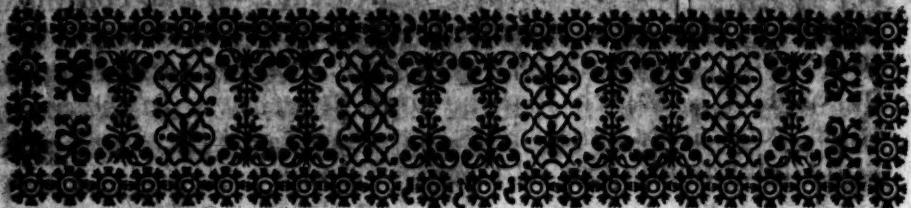
Again, *Thou that enlargest me when I was in distress,* is in effect the same, with *O Lamb of God, that takest away the Sins of the World, have Mercy upon us.* And *Thou that sett'est me at liberty when I was in trouble, hearken to my Prayer,* is all one as to say, *O Christ, hear us.* The Design of all which is, to urge the foregoing Prayers and Intercessions with the greatest importunity, to shew the Ardency of our Desires, and the Urgency of our need of them. And therefore whenever we put up these pious Ejaculations, or hear them repeated, let us be sure to do it with Hearts fir'd with Zeal, and fill'd with Sincerity and true Devotion, that they may ascend up as Incense, and return with Blessings into our own Bosom.

After these follow the three *Kyrie Eleisons,* or the three *Lord have mercy upon us,* directed to each of the three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, call'd therefore the lesser Litany; of which having spoken at large in the Morning-Service after the Creed, and in the beginning of the greater Litany, I shall, to avoid needless Repetitions, refer the Reader to them.

Thus I have finish'd the Third Part of the Litany, consisting of Prayers and Intercessions to be made for our selves and all Men. And here, 'tis thought, ended the Antient and Primitive Litany; that which follows being an Addition to it, suppos'd to be made about six hundred Years after Christ, when the Enemies of Christianity prevail'd too far against the Christian Church, and harass'd the Members of it with great Troubles and Persecutions. In which afflicted

afflicted Condition of the Church, 'tis said that St. *Gregory* the Great compos'd and added the following Prayers, suited to a State of Persecution; which because of the continual Troubles that have molested the Church, have continuall to be us'd in it ever since. And these Prayers come next to be explain'd, which shall be done hereafter. In the mean time, remember what hath been said, and the Lord give you Understanding in all things. *Amen.*

*On*

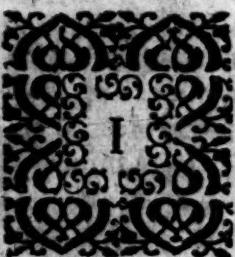


On the ADDITIONAL PRAYERS to the LITANY.

DISCOURSE XXXI.

PSAL. ciii. 10.

He hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities.


Observ'd in my last, that after the Deprecations of Evil, and Intercessions for Good to all Men, of which I have spoken at large; the remaining Prayers and Ejaculations were added to the Litany in a time of great Trouble and Tribulation to the Church: to which being still liable, and having had had some share of it ever since, they have been thought fit to be continu'd, and make up the last Part of the Litany, to the Explication whereof I must now address my self.

It begins with the Lord's Prayer, which hath been ever thought of such singular use, and had in so high estimation, that the Church would have no Office or Service to be without it, and therefore could not well be omitted here: for this Divine Form is not only the Rule or Platform, to frame all other Prayers by, but the Means that give them

all

all their Force and Efficacy. And as the primitive Christians are said never to repeat the Lord's Prayer with greater Warmth and Earnestness, than when their Hearts were rais'd and heated with the foregoing Petitions of the Litany; so should we endeavour to bring our Hearts and Tongues to recite it with the same Devotion and Fervency, that it may supply the Defects, and sanctify all the other parts of our Prayers. But I shall not need to add any more here for the Explication of this Divine Form, it being already done in the Morning-Service immediately after the Absolution, and more largely in the Practical Discourses on the Church-Catechism, to which the Reader may have recourse.

And therefore I shall proceed to those pious Prayers and Ejaculations that follow it, the first whereof is in these words; *O Lord deal not with us after our Sins, nor reward us after our Iniquities.* Which words are taken out of this Psalm of David; wherein after many Instances of the Divine Bounty, Patience and Goodness, he adds this in our Text, *He hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities.* Which Character of God's Long-suffering and Goodness, the Church here turns into a Prayer; and the Litany breaks it into two Petitions, the one to be utter'd by the Minister, as, *O Lord deal not with us after our Sins;* the other to be answer'd by the People, saying, *Neither reward us after our Iniquities.* Of each of which particularly. And,

First, The Minister is directed to say, O Lord, deal not with us after our Sins; where the mentioning of *our Sins* implies,

1st, The Confession of them; *2dly, Our Liableness to suffer, and to be punish'd for them;* and, *3dly, Our desiring him not to deal with us after our Sins,* is a Prayer for the Mitigation of Rigour, that God would proportion his Punishments, not by the Rules of strict Justice, but by the Measures of his Mercy and Goodness. These things contain the Sum and Sense of this Petition; wherein we first freely own and acknowledg our Sins, that we have wickedly broken his Laws, and many ways justly offended and provok'd him. And indeed that is the best way of finding Favour and Forgiveness of them: for he that humbly owns and confesses his Fault, is in a far better way to obtain Pardon, than he that stiffly maintains and persists in it; Mercy is promis'd to the one, and nothing but a fearful

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Expectation of Judgment threatned to the other. This is the best way to clear and quiet our Conscience, which is eas'd and lightned by Confession, but burden'd and troubled by Concealment. *Whilst I kept silence, and hid mine Iniquities* (saith David, Psal. 32. 3, 4, 5.) *my Bones consum'd away with daily complaining day and night; thy Hand was heavy upon me, and my Moisture was like the Drought in Summer: but when I acknowledg'd my Sins, and said, I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord, thou soon forgavest the Wickedness of my Sin.* And therefore our Church hath so wisely order'd this Petition, as to include in it a free Acknowledgment and Confession of our Sins; and not only so, but here is imply'd,

2dly, Our Obnoxiousnes to suffer and to be punish'd for them. All Sin hath a Guilt in it, which carries with it an Obligation to Punishment; and the owning our Sins, is a plain Confession, that we deserve to suffer: and indeed so do the best of us, for we have justly incens'd the Lord by our Transgressions, and stirr'd up his Wrath by our Iniquities; and because the Wages of Sin is Death, we may reasonably fear and expect the Denterit of our Crimes. To avert which, our Church here desires God, *not to deal with us after our Sins;* which is a Prayer for the mitigation of Rigour, that God would deal with us not by the Rules of strict Justice, but by the Measures of Mercy and Goodness. This hath been the frequent and hearty Prayer of good Men in all Ages, who own'd themselves guilty of more and greater Sins, than they could answer for or expiate, and therefore cast themselves upon the Mercy of God, to be reliev'd from the Rigour of his Justice. *Correct me, O Lord,* (saith the Prophet Jeremy, Chap. 10. 24.) *but with Judgment, not in thine Anger, lest thou bring me to nought.* Where he does not pray against Correction, knowing that his Sins justly deserv'd it, and that it might be sometimes necessary and expedient for him; but for the moderating of it, that it may be mild and gentle, not too sharp and severe: *Correct me with Judgment,* saith he, *not with the Strictness and Severity of Judgment, but with Judgment temper'd with Mildness and Mercy.* *Not in thine Anger* (saith he) *lest thou bring me to nought;* that is, not in the heat of thy Fury, or the height of thy Indignation, for that would be too heavy to be borne, and would sink me into nothing under the weight of it. And instead of that he begs of God to mix his Corrections with Mer-

cy,

cy, and to lay his Rod gently upon him, that he may be able to bear it. To the same purpose we find the Psalmist praying, saying, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified*; Psal. 143. 2. Where he owns that God may justly enter into Judgment with us, both for the Sins committed by us, and the Talents committed to us; and should he call us to a strict account for either, we are not able to answer him one of a thousand, the best of us cannot justify our selves, and instead of being justify'd, must be condemn'd by him. So he elsewhere acknowledges, saying, *If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme, to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?* Psal. 130. 3, 4. meaning, that no Man living is able to stand a strict trial for these matters: *But there is Mercy with thee* (saith he) *and therefore shalt thou be fear'd.* And hence we have Encouragement to put up this Petition to him, *Lord, deal not with us after our Sins.*

And that, (1.) Because he is able to abate the Rigour of his Laws, and to temper them with Mercy and Forgiveness, as he sees fit. 'Twas truly affirm'd by one of the antient Fathers, that God in giving his Laws did not deprive himself of the Liberty to remit, but still reserv'd the Power of pardoning, and allaying the Severity of his own Precepts. We know, in earthly Courts, Mercy and Clemency are allow'd to mitigate the Rigour of human Laws: for tho' the inferiour Judges and Magistrates are requir'd to keep to the Letter of the Law, and to punish according to it; yet the Prince, as supreme, hath power to remit or relax the Sentence, and to abate the Edge and Extremity of it. And if earthly Kings have this Prerogative, sure the King of Kings, from whom they receive their Power, must have it much more: *To the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgiveness* (saith the Prophet Daniel) *tho' we have rebell'd against him;* Dan. 9. 9. 'Tis God's Prerogative to pardon; and if he do acquit, there is none can condemn: *Rom. 8. 33.*

And as he is able, so, (2.) is he willing to shew Mercy; for he is slow to Anger, and ready to forgive. He is not inclin'd to deal rigorously with his People, nor to be too strict in marking Iniquity; but is willing to make all possible Allowances: he abates for our InfirmitieS, and exacts no more than he enables us to perform; he is ever ready to assist our Weaknesses, and accepts the imperfect Services of a willing Mind. He looks more to the inward

Sincerity and Bent of the Heart, than to any outward Appearances ; and if that be right and sound, he can easily overlook many Infirmities. In short, he allays the Severity of his Laws to the truly Penitent, and extends his Grace and Favour to the Humble.

Of this we have many Instances in Holy Scripture, and many Acknowledgments of good Men in all Ages. So we find *Ezra* confessing in the behalf of the *Israelites*, that God punish'd them less than their *Iniquities* deserve'd, and at length gave *Deliverance to them*; Ezra 9. 13. *David* acknowledges in the Text, that *he hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities.* *Zophar* told *Job*, that *God exacteth less from us, than our Iniquities deserve;* Job 11. 6. And indeed so he doth, or else it would go hard with the best of us ; for the Guilt of any one Sin is too heavy for us to bear, and we cannot answer or atone for the least Transgression. If any complain of the Greatness of his Sufferings, he will do well to consider the Greatness of his Sins ; and then he will soon see that there is no proportion at all between them, and that these light Afflictions that are but for a moment, come vastly short of the heavy Weight of his Transgressions.

The best of Men, if strictly examin'd, will be found faulty, for *who can say his Heart is clean?* And *in many things* (saith the Apostle) *we offend all* ; and because the least Offence makes us liable to Punishment, we have great reason to pray as we are here directed, *Lord, deal not with us after our Sins.* And because God is rich in Mercy, and ready to forgive, we have abundant Encouragement to ask these things at his hand, who is more inclin'd to give, than we are to ask. And this is the first Petition to be spoken to, which is to be utter'd by the Minister alone, *O Lord, deal not with us after our Sins.*

The Second is to the same purpose, and is to be answer'd by the People, saying, *Neither reward us after our Iniquities.* The Reward of Iniquity is the Wrath of God, with all the direful Effects of his Displeasure ; for all Iniquity is an Affront and Indignity offer'd to our Maker, 'tis a Violation of his Laws, a Contempt of his Power, an Abuse of his Goodness, and an insolent Defiance of the Majesty and Authority of Heaven. And sure these things deserve and call for the severest Punishments : *The Wages of Sin is Death,* saith the Apostle, Rom. 6. and that not a temporal Death only,

only, but eternal Death and Damnation. Now should God give us the Desert of our Sins, and the Reward of our Iniquities, we should never be free from Trouble here, nor from endless Misery hereafter. And therefore we pray him here, not to reward us after our Iniquities ; that is, that we may not suffer what our Sins do deserve, but that he will deal gently with us, and proportion his Punishments more by the Measure of his Compassions, than of our Crimes. This we find he hath done with others, who have thankfully acknowledg'd it ; and we may well hope, that upon our humble Suit to him, he will do the same with us : for his Hand is not shorten'd, that it cannot save, nor his Bowels straiten'd, that he cannot pity ; but both are ready to relieve and succour : *He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and his Compassions fail not* ; which the Church acknowledges to be the true Reason that we are not consumed, Lam. 3. 22. For should he reckon with us, even for the Iniquities of our Holy Things, or call us to an account for the Failings and Imperfections that cleave to our best Performances, we were not able to stand the trial, or appear in his presence, but might be justly sentenc'd for them unto eternal Misery. And if our best Actions have Sin enough in them to condemn us, how can we answer for the worst part of our Lives ? *If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Sinner and Ungodly appear?* So that we have all need to beseech God not to reward us after our Iniquities ; which we are encourag'd to ask, because *his Mercy is over all his Works.* He is slow to Anger, and ready to forgive ; he doth not watch for our Haltings, or seek occasion against us, but is willing rather to excuse than aggravate our Failings ; nor does he delight in punishing his Creatures, but is ready to shew Mercy and Favour to them : *He doth not keep his Anger for ever* (faith the Psalmist) *nor suffer his whole Displeasure to arise.* He knoweth our Frame, and considereth that we are but Dust ; and therefore is inclin'd rather to deal in Mercy, than in Rigour with us : which is sufficient encouragement to put up these Petitions to him ; *Lord, deal not with us after our Sins, nor reward us according to our Iniquities.* And thus we see the Sense of these pious Ejaculations.

From what hath been said upon them, we may learn a few useful and practical Lessons. As,

(1.) To watch and strive against all Sin, to the utmost of our power ; for 'twill be in vain to complain of Sufferings, whilst we continue our Sins. The Justice of God will not permit him to acquit the Guilty ; and therefore we must cease from sinning, before we can hope to cease from suffering : whilst we provoke him with our Iniquities, we must expect to be punish'd with his Judgments. And because our mortal State will not suffer us to be wholly free from Sin, which cannot be expected in this Life ; therefore we pray not to be wholly free from Sufferings, the necessary Consequent of sinning, but to moderate the Punishment, that it be not strain'd up to the Rigour of his Laws, but to be mitigated with Mercy, that we may be able to bear it and amend by it : which should teach us to strive as much as possible against all the Occasions and Temptations to it ; and if at any time we are surpriz'd by Inadvertence, or by Weakness drawn into it, then are we,

(2.) To confess and bewail it, and labour by Repentance to mortify and turn from it. This is the way to find Mercy, which God himself hath prescrib'd, and to which he hath promis'd to grant it. And indeed none can reasonably desire the Mitigation of Laws upon milder Terms, than Repentance and better Obedience ; for who will remit a Fault to one that obstinately persists in it ? or relax the Punishment of a Law, where 'tis daily and wilfully broken ? And therefore if we mean to find Mercy and Favour at God's hand, we must seek it by hearty Prayer, and qualify our selves for it by true Repentance.

(3.) From what hath been said, let us learn to cast our selves wholly upon the Mercy of God in Jesus Christ ; for he must deal with us after our Sins, and reward us after our Iniquities, unless we are reliev'd by the Mercy of God, and take shelter in the Merits of a Saviour. We have no Merits of our own to rely upon for Salvation, but we have Demerits enough to bring us to Damnation. If God correct us in Anger, as we deserve, he will soon bring us to nothing : If he enter into strict Judgment with us, there is no Man living can be justify'd. Our best Works will rather condemn than justify us, and our holiest things will render us rather guilty than innocent before God. 'Twas the Pride of the Pharisees, to expect to be justify'd by their Works. If we hope to appear righteous in God's sight, we must disclaim all Merits of our own, and desire to be found in Christ's

Christ's Righteousness, and cast our selves wholly upon his Mercy and Merits.

Lastly, If we would have God not to deal with us after our Sins, nor reward us according to our Iniquities, we must take care not to deal rigorously with our Brethren, but to mix Candour and Kindness with all our Actions and Carriage to one another. This is no more than what the Golden Rule of *doing as we would be done by*, justly exacts from us: if we will be favourably dealt with our selves, we must deal favourably, not rigorously with others; for *they shall have Judgment without Mercy, who shew no Mercy.* The Servant to whom his Master had forgiven a thousand Talents, taking his Fellow-Servant by the throat for a hundred Pence, so highly incens'd his Master, that he recall'd his former Favour, and exacted from him the utmost Farthing: Even so, saith our Saviour, will your heavenly Father deal with all those who expect to find Mercy without showing any; the same Measure that they mete to others, shall be measur'd to them again. He that stands with his Debtor for a Day, and takes all manner of Forfeitures that the Rigour of the Law may give him; he that studies Revenge for every slight Offence, and shews no Patience or Forbearance to his Fellow-Creature, justly forfeits all Title to Favour, and shall be treated with rigour, as his Sins deserve. Wherefore, let us learn that piece of Charity, which *suffers long and is kind*; and then by bearing with the Infirmities of others, and shewing Kindness to those that need it now, God Almighty will overlook our Weaknesses, and shew Mercy and Kindness to us in the last Day: which God grant, &c.





DISCOURSE XXXII.

PSAL. XII. 5, 6.

*Now for the comfortless Troubles sake of the Needy,
and because of the deep sighing of the Poor, I
will up, saith the Lord, and will help every one
from him that swelleth against him, and will set
him at rest.*

AFTER those pious Ejaculations of, *O God, deal not with us after our Sins, nor reward us after our Iniquities*; in which we beg for Abatement of Rigour in God's dealings with us, and the Mitigation of the Punishments due to our Sins and Iniquities: the Litany calls upon us to join in a Prayer for Help under all the Troubles and Adversities with which we are liable to be oppress'd. And finding in it, *the Sighings of a contrite Heart, and the Desires of such as are sorrowful*, made use of as Arguments to stir up the Almighty to come to our Help and Assistance against all our Enemies; I shall treat of it from these words of the Psalmist to the same purpose: *Now for the comfortless Troubles sake of the Needy, and because of the deep sighing of the Poor, I will up, saith the Lord, and will help them from him that swelleth against them, and will set them at rest*. In which words, with relation to the Prayer in the Litany compos'd by them, I shall observe,

First, The Person to whom the Prayer is directed, describ'd by the Titles of, O God, merciful Father; and likewise by his Property of pitying the Afflicted, who despisest not the Sighing of a contrite Heart, nor the Desire of such as be sorrowful.

Secondly, The Matter of the Prayer, or the things ask'd in it; and they are, 1st, A merciful Assistance in the Prayers we make to him in all our Troubles and Adversities, whensoever they oppress us. And, 2dly, A gracious Hearing and Acceptance of them.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The End or Aim of such Prayers: and they are, 1st, *That those Evils which the Craft and Subtlety of the Devil or Man worketh against us may be brought to nought,* and by the Providence of his Goodness may be dispers'd. And, 2dly, *That we his Servants being hurt by no Persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto him in his holy Church, thro Jesus Christ our Lord.* These are the Particulars both of the Text and Prayer, which containing matters of great use and benefit to us, must be particularly handled. And I begin,

First, With the Person to whom this and all our other Prayers are directed; and that is, to *God our merciful Father.* This is a proper Epithet or Attribute to usher in the following Request, which is for Help and Assistance, and each word may serve to strengthen our Faith and Confidence of obtaining our Desire; for the Relation of *Father* does in a manner naturally incline and engage him to hear and help us, as may be seen in earthly Parents towards their Children, who are wont to be tenderly affected and afflicted too with all their Wants and Necessities. But tho some earthly Parents may be so unnatural, as to forget and forsake their Children, yet we need not fear this in our Heavenly Father, whose Compassions are as far above theirs, as the Heavens are above the Earth. To assure us hereof, our Church gives him the Title of *merciful Father;* Mercy and Goodness being essential to his Nature, and the Attribute in which he chiefly delights, for *his Mercy rejoiceth over Judgment.* And what may we not hope for, from so tender, gracious, and merciful a Father?

Again, Earthly Parents are oft-times impotent, and unable to help and relieve their Children that cry unto them. But he whom we here address to, is *our God,* as well as merciful Father, and so hath all Power in Heaven and Earth; and is abundantly able to hear and answer our Requests: which the next words of the Prayer shew him to be ever ready to do, for *he despiseth not the sighing of a contrite Heart, nor the Desire of such as be sorrowful.* And our Text tells us the same; he regardeth the comfortless Troubles of the *Needy,* and heareth the deep sighing of the *Poor.* Which *David* confirm'd by his own Experience; *Lord, thou knowest all my Desire, and my groaning is not hid from thee;* Psal. 38. 9. And elsewhere, *A broken and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;* Psal. 51. 17.

Where

Where the Term of *not despising*, tho' diminutive, signifies more than it seems to express; viz. that he not only not despises, but highly values and esteems a contrite Heart; that the sighing of the Poor pierces his Heart, and he is deeply affected with all their Groans, which ever move him to Compassion and Relief. The Sighings of a contrite Heart, and the Desires of a sorrowful Spirit proceed from the Holy Spirit of God, which makes *Intercession for us with Sighs and Groans that cannot be utter'd*, Rom. 8. 26. And God is so far from despising, that he delights in the Effects and Operations of his Holy Spirit. Men indeed, that can and ought to help in time of Adversity, do often despise our Sighs, slight our Tears, and hear our Groans without Pity or Remorse; but 'tis quite otherwise with God our merciful Father, our Sighs and Groans affect his Heart, and our Cries enter into his Ears. We read of *Pharaoh*, that he was deaf to all the Cries of the *Israelites*, despis'd their sighing under their heavy Bondage; and instead of easing, increas'd the Burden of their Labours and Sorrows. But their Cries and Groans pierc'd the Heavens, enter'd into the Ears of God, who had compassion upon them, and deliver'd them from their hard Bondage; *Exod. 2. 33.* The Sighings of the Poor come up before him, and he regards the Desires of the Sorrowful; which is great Encouragement to cry unto him in times of Trouble, and that our Desires be accompany'd with Sighs and Groans, which will not vanish into empty Air, but come up to the Ears of God, and return with a gracious Answer into our own bosom: but then these Sighs and Groans must proceed from a contrite Heart, and these must be the Desires of a truly sorrowful Mind; Contrition and Sorrow for Sin must go along with them, or else God will despise such false and feigned Sighs, and instead of finding Compassion, will meet only with Vengeance and Indignation.

But still God will highly regard, and reward too, the sincere Sighings of a broken and contrite Heart, and answer the unfeigned Desires of such as be truly sorrowful and penitent; which should teach us to be alike tenderly affected towards the Miserable and Distressed. Thus we see the Person to whom this Prayer is directed, even to *God our merciful Father*; together with the Encouragement we have to come to him, *who despiseth not the sighing of a contrite Heart, nor the Desire of such as be sorrowful.*

But what is the Matter of this Prayer, or the Things ask'd for in it? Why, that consists chiefly in these two things:

1st, God's merciful Assistance in our Prayers. And,
2dly, His gracious Acceptance of them.

The first is in these words; *Mercifully assist our Prayers that we make before thee, in all our Troubles and Adversities, whenever they oppress us.* The second in these, *And graciously hear us.* For the

1st, We therein beg of God mercifully to assist us in all our Prayers, but chiefly in those that we make before him in all our Troubles and Adversities, whenever they oppress us. That all Men are subject to Troubles and Adversities in this World, and to be oppres'd with Hardships and Persecutions, is a Truth well known to all, and needs no other proof than the sad Experience of the best of Men. And that times of Trouble and Affliction are proper seasons of Prayer, is a thing acknowledg'd by all sorts of Men, who are wont to have recourse to it in all such Times and Conditions; and that by God's own direction, who bids us to *call upon him in all the times of Trouble*, Psal. 50. 15. This was the constant practice of David, who in all his Troubles and Difficulties is said to *give himself unto Prayer*, Psal. 109. 3. The same is affirm'd of the Jews, who were wont to *visit the Lord in their Trouble, and to pour out a Prayer when his Chastening was upon them*; Isa. 26. 16. Tho Prosperity is apt to make Men forget God and themselves, yet Adversity is wont to mind them of both. The Mariners in a Storm call'd each upon their God, Jonah 1. 5. whom in a Calm they had wholly forgotten. Tho Wealth and Honour are prone to puff Men up with Pride, yet Chastisements and Afflictions will make them fall down on their knees in Prayer.

Now because we are not sufficient of our selves to think a good Thought, and so know not how or what to pray for as we ought; we here beseech God *mercifully to assist us in our Prayers*, especially in all such as we make to him under the pressure of any Affliction or Calamity; for then we are apt to be so cast down, as to be unable to look up, or to raise our Affections towards Heaven. We are prone to be disturb'd with Fears, and so to despair of God's Goodness, as to give up all for lost; and therefore we beg him to strengthen our Faith and Hope in him, to arm us

with

with Patience and Courage to bear, what in his Wisdom and Goodness he shall think fit to lay upon us.

And as we desire Assistance in our Prayers, so do we the Acceptance of them, in these words, *And graciously bear us*; in all those we make unto him, when any Trouble or Adversity oppresses us. If our Prayers are not heard in such times of Misery, we must be left in a hopeless and forlorn Condition; for when he who can alone help, turns the deaf Ear to our Cries, what hope can there be of any Relief? Whither can we go when our last Refuge fails? *If thou hearest not* (saith the Psalmist) *I become like them that go down into the Pit*; Psal. 28. 1. All my Hopes are dead and buried in the Grave: If God smile not upon us, when the World frowns, we soon sink into an Abyss of Sorrow. But if God vouchsafe to assist us in making, and accept us in offering up our Prayers, we are safe in the greatest Troubles. Nothing can hurt him who hath the Ear of God open to hear, and his Hand ready to help him; for he hath a sure Refuge to have recourse to in all the needful times of Trouble. Wherefore let us by our Devotion and Repentance make sure of this retreating Place, that we may say with David, *Thou art my Castle and House of Defence, whereunto I may always resort.*

To which end, let us not forget him in Prosperity, if we expect he should remember us in Adversity. For if we neglect him in Health and Wealth, and only come to him in Sickness and times of Necessity, he will say to us as he did to the *Israelites*, *Go and cry unto the Gods that ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your Tribulation*; Judg. 10. 14. To come to him only for our own need, shews that we have no Love or Honour for him, but our selves; for a true sense of our Duty and Dependence on him, would keep us constant to him, and make us humble and thankful Supplicants both in Prosperity and Adversity. And therefore let us make our frequent and fervent Prayers unto God, as well in our Affluence and Plenty, as in our Affliction and Misery; and then having made him our Friend in Prosperity, we may the more boldly and cheerfully go to him for Assistance and Acceptance in Adversity. So shall we be safe from our Enemies, and secure in all Times and Conditions: and this will lead me to the

Last Particular both of the Text and Prayer, to wit, the End and Benefit of such Prayers; which is double.

1st, For

1st, For the preventing of Evil ; and particularly, *That those Evils which the Craft and Subtlety of the Devil or Man worketh against us, may be brought to nought, and by his good Providence dispers'd.*

2dly, For the promoting of Good, *That we his Servants being hurt by no Persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto him in his Holy Church ; or, as the Text hath it, That God may help every one from him that swelleth against him, and set him at rest ; that is, that they may be secur'd against the Devices of the Proud, and find Peace and Rest in the midst of all their Machinations.*

For the 1st, That the Devil and his busy Agents and Emissaries use their Craft and Subtlety in forming Plots and Designs against the Church, is too notorious to be deny'd ; and that the faithful Ministers and Members of it meet with great trouble from such wicked Instruments, who study to undermine its Power, and hinder the Efficacy of its Doctrine, is found and felt by sad Experience. These evil Designs are sometimes more secret, and cunningly carry'd on by the invisible Arts of human Policy and Contrivance ; sometimes more open, when they think them ripe for Execution. Now in such cases our first and principal Resort must be to God Almighty, who hath taken his Church into his particular Care and Protection, and promis'd that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. His Wisdom can discover, and his Power and Providence can easily defeat all such Contrivances. And therefore our Church here teaches us to pray that all such *Evils as the Craft and Subtlety of the Devil or Man worketh against us, may be brought to nought, and by the Providence of his Goodness may be dispers'd.* And for those who by their Pride and Insolence seek to disturb the Ministers, and divide the Members of the Church, our Text declares, that *God will help them against those that swell against them, and will set them at rest.* And this we read he hath done in all Ages : for tho he permit these evil Instruments to lay their Plots with the Depth of Policy, and to weave their Webs with all the Finery of Art and Invention, yet he soon sweeps all away with the Besom of Destruction ; yea, tho they may applaud the Wisdom of their well-contriv'd Projects, and hug themselves with the Hopes of their desir'd Success, yet are they blasted in a moment, and become lasting Monuments of their own Shame and Folly. *The Lord bringeth the Counsel of the Wicked to nought* (saith the Psalmist, Psal.

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33. 10.) and maketh the Devices of the People to be of none effect. And of this we have many former and late Instances, which may encourage us to pray and put our trust in him upon all such occasions ; for he hath said, *Call upon me in the time of Trouble, and I will hear you : and they that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast never fail'd them that seek thee.* Psal. 9. 10. These things will engage God on our side, and then we need not fear what Man can do unto us. *The Lord taketh my part* (saith David, Psal. 118. 6, 7.) therefore *Shall I see my Desire upon mine Enemies.* And if God be for us (saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 31.) who can be against us ? They must first be too hard for him, before they can hurt us. Such devout Prayers will either prevent Persecution, or preserve us safe under it ; which should teach us to have recourse to it, as our best Armour of Defence against our Enemies.

And as these Prayers will serve to keep off Evil from us, so will they, 2dly, tend to promote our Good, and give us matter of Praise and Thanksgiving to our Maker and Preserver ; *That we his Servants being hurt by no Persecution, may evermore give thanks unto him in his Holy Church.* This shews us the great End of all our Prayers, and especially of those that are put up in times of Adversity and Persecution, and that is, the Glory of God ; which indeed ought to be the main Scope and Aim of all our Actions, being oblig'd to own and thank him for all our spiritual and temporal Mercies, and to direct all our Words and Works to his Praise and Glory. Of this we are minded here, as *we are his Servants* ; for *a Servant honoureth his Master,* Mal. 1. 6. and God challenges it from us upon that account ; *If I be your Master, where is my Honour ? saith the Lord of Hosts.* To which we are farther oblig'd by his keeping us from *being hurt by any Persecution* ; not but that he may sometimes suffer us to fall into Persecution, but we shall be so far from receiving any hurt or harm by it, that it shall work together for good, for the Exercise of Grace here, and the Increase of Glory hereafter.

For this we are minded here, *evermore to give thanks unto God* ; and well we may for such signal Care and Protection of his good Providence. Let us then bless and adore him for his unspeakable Goodness, and ascribe to him alone the Glory of all our Deliverances, for it is he who hath wrought all our Works in us and for us ; and therefore *not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the Praise,*

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Praise. *I will always give thanks unto the Lord* (saith Holy David, Psal. 34. 1.) *his Praise shall ever be in my Mouth.* And elsewhere after a Prayer for Deliverance from the Malice and Power of the Heathen, he adds, *So we that are thy People and Sheep of thy Pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever, and will always be shewing forth thy Praise from Generation to Generation.* Psal. 79. 14. And this the Litany here would have done in God's Holy Church, that is, in a publick and solemn manner with God's People in his own House; signifying, that publick Mercies and Deliverances require publick Praises and Thanksgivings. 'Tis not sufficient to render private Thanks for publick Blessings, but it must be done solemnly and in the Congregation; so the Jews did in their Temples and Synagogues. *David, the great Master of Thanksgivings, resolv'd to pay his Vows, and offer his Praises in the Courts of the Lord's House, and to speak of all his wondrous Works in the great Congregation.* God is more honour'd in the publick Assemblies of the Church, than the Meetings of private Houses; and hath promis'd a greater Blessing to those that meet him in his House, than those who stay at home in their own. Wherefore let us not forsake the assembling our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another to be evermore giving thanks unto God in his holy Church; let us highly value the Liberty of God's House, and constantly frequent the Devotions of it: so shall we, who now sing Praises to him here on Earth, e'er long sing unceasant *Hallelujahs* to him in Heaven. Which God grant, &c.



D I S.



DISCOURSE XXXIII.

PSAL. LXXIX. 9.

Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and be merciful to our Sins, for thy Name's sake.

AFTER the foregoing Prayer in times of Adversity and Trouble, there follow in the Litany some short pithy Ejaculations, taken out of the Psalms to the same purpose; which are not vain Repetitions, as some weakly object, but pious Suits of Importunity and Earnestness of Affection, which are highly pleasing and acceptable unto God.

And the first of these immediately follows the preceding Prayer, in these words; *O Lord arise, help us, and deliver us for thy Name's sake.* Which words are taken out of the 44th Psalm, ver. 26. *Arise, O Lord, and help us, and deliver us for thy Mercy's sake.* And more fully out of the words of our Text, *Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and be merciful to our Sins for thy Name's sake.* In both which, we may observe a double Petition:

First, For Help under all our Troubles and Afflictions. And,

Secondly, For Deliverance in God's time and way out of all. As also,

Thirdly, The Person we address to for these things; and that is, to the God of our Salvation. And,

Lastly, The Motive or Inducement for which we ask them; and that is, for the Glory of his Name, and for his Mercy's sake. Each of these will afford Matter of some use and benefit to us, and must therefore be particularly consider'd. And,

First, Of the first Petition, which is for Help and Assistance under all the Troubles and Afflictions of this Life. That

That these things besal even the best of Men in this World, is a matter too well known and felt by sad Experience, to need any other proof. *Many are the Troubles of the Righteous* (saith holy David) of which he himself had a great share; and so had Daniel and Job, and all other holy Men of whom we read both in the Old and New Testament.

When David compos'd these two Psalms, out of which the words of our Text and Litany were taken, the Church labour'd under great Difficulties and Distress, and the true Members of it groan'd under many Hardships and Persecutions. In the first he complains, *For thy sake are we kill'd all the day long, and are counted as Sheep appointed to be slain*, ver. 22. meaning, they were in continual fear and danger of Death from the Malice and Cruelty of their Enemies: by which means our Soul (saith he, ver. 25.) is brought low, even to the Dust, our Belly cleaveth unto the Ground. In the other he complains of the bold Inroads made upon the Church by bloody Persecutors; *O God* (saith he) the Heathen are come into thine Inheritance, thy holy Temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a Heap of Stones: the dead Bodies of thy Servants have they given to the Fowls of the Air, and the Flesh of thy Saints to the Beasts of the Field; shedding their Blood like Water on every side of Jerusalem. ver. 1, 2, 3. Now in this persecuted and distressed State of the Church, the Psalmist prays for Help and Succour from above, saying, *Help us, O God, and deliver us*. And because the Lord seem'd to sit still without taking notice of their Calamities, like one in a sleep; he calls upon him to arise, up Lord, why sleepest thou? Awake, and be not absent from us for ever: wherefore hidest thou thy Face, and forgettest our Misery and Trouble? ver. 23, 24, 26. And then adds, *Arise, help us, and deliver us*, &c. which being found in the Jewish Liturgy, was after follow'd and introduc'd into the Christian Litany. 'Twas taken out of the Book of Numbers, Chap. 10. 35. *Rise up, O Lord, and let thine Enemies be scatter'd; let them that hate thee, flee before thee*. Which words are quoted and used by the Psalmist, Psal. 68. 1. and from both made a part of our publick Service.

But to speak more directly to the Words themselves, the first thing here ask'd is Help and Aid under Afflictions and Persecution, which is a time wherein we need the strongest Cordials; *O Lord, arise and help us*. Afflictions and Troubles are apt to sink and depress the Spirits, and

by Sorrow of Heart (saith Solomon) the Spirits are broken. We find the Psalmist often complaining of the Weight and Burden of his Afflictions ; *O God (saith he) my Soul is cast down, I am full of heaviness, and go mourning all the day long; for thy Rod lies heavy upon me, and thy Hand presseth me sore.* And there is none of us, but in some way or measure taste of this bitter Cup, tho' some have deeper Draughts, and drink it off to the very dregs ; yet all in some kind or other sip and share in it, some are afflicted in Body, some in Mind, some in Estate, sonic in their good Name. And none go wholly free from the Troubles and Calamities of this Life ; for *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must in some way or other suffer Persecution.*

Now to bear us up under these, we must implore Help from above, for our own Strength is not able to support us in such trials ; we need stronger Cordials than this World can afford, and therefore our recourse must be to Heaven, for Divine Aid and Assistance : *My Help (saith the Psalmist) cometh from him who made Heaven and Earth.* Our own Strength is but Weakness, and without him we cannot but fall ; but his Grace will be sufficient for us, to keep us in the needful time of Trouble.

Now the Help we implore under Afflictions consists,
 1st, In Patience and Courage to bear them ; for *no Chastisement for the present is joyous, but grievous.* The Rod hath a Smart, that is apt to make them shrink that feel it ; there is a Sting in Affliction, that wounds and pierces through with many Sorrows : so that we have need of Patience to pass thro' the Troubles and Tribulations that attend us in this World ; and the Apostle wills us to let Patience have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing ; James 1. 4. And our Saviour advised his Disciples, *in Patience to possess their Souls.* Luke 21. 19. intimating, that he that is out of patience hath lost the possession of his Soul. But because Flesh and Blood is apt to grow impatient, to despond and to sink under the Burden of their Troubles, we are to pray to God to give us Patience, and to arm us with Strength and Courage to go thro' with what he is pleas'd to lay upon us.

2dly, We ask the Help of Assurance and Confidence in him, that we may by the Eye of Faith look beyond this World, to that Crown of Glory that is set at the end of it. So did the Apostles, who *walk'd by Faith, and not by Sight,* 2 Cor. 5. 7. that is, they minded not present and visible

visible things, whether prosperous or adverse; but were acted by Faith, which is the Substance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1. And then those light afflictions which were but for a moment, wrought out for them a more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory: While they looked not at the things that are seen, which are temporal; but at the things that are not seen, which are eternal. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. They made future invisible things present and visible to them, and that made them reckon the Sufferings of this Life not worthy to be named or compared with the Glory that shall be reveal'd in us. Rom. 8. 18. This our Saviour himself did, whom we are bid to imitate by looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Glory that was set before him endur'd the Cross, and despis'd the Shame, and is now set down at the right Hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. 12. 2. And this will lead me to

The Second Part of this Petition, which is not only for Help under Afflictions, but for Deliverance from them: *Arise, O Lord, help us, and deliver us.* The greatest Comfort under any Trouble, is the Hope of an end of it; and the Prospect of a Deliverance doth mightily lighten the Burden of our Sorrows. Now of this all good Men have an Assurance, either in this Life, or at the end of it: for God, who cannot falsify or fail of his Word, hath promis'd to hear and deliver us, and to be a present Help in time of need. *He shall deliver thee in six Troubles* (saith holy Job) *yea, in seven there shall no Evil touch thee.* In Famine he shall redeem thee from Death, and in War from the Power of the Sword. Thou shalt be hid from the Scourge of the Tongue, neither shalt thou be afraid of Destruction when it cometh, &c. Job 5. 19, 20, 21. Tho' great are the Troubles of the Righteous (saith holy David, Psal. 34. 19, 22.) yet the Lord delivereth him out of all: he delivereth the Souls of his Servants, and all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitute. 'Twere endless to rehearse the many Promises made in Holy Scripture to this purpose. Now he is faithful that hath promis'd, and we may safely rely upon him, who hath never fail'd them that seek him. And this may abundantly encourage us to go to him, and say, *O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us;* and be merciful to our Sins, so as not to inflict upon us the just Punishment of them. From whence I proceed to the

Third Thing propounded, which is the Person to whom this Prayer is made ; and that is to the God of our Salvation : *Help us, O God of our Salvation, and deliver us.* God is the sole and proper Object of all true Devotion, to whom we are to apply in all our Wants and Necessities ; he is the *God that heareth Prayers, and therefore to him shall all Flesh come :* he alone can hear and help us, and to leave him for any other, is to forsake the Fountain of living Waters, and to hew out to our selves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water. And as he is a God of Might and Power, that can do what pleaseth him, so he is the God of our Salvation, that is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him ; and likewise a God of Mercy and Goodness, that is as willing as able to help us. When therefore any Danger threatens, or any Evil is actually upon us, let us betake our selves to the God of our Salvation, and call upon him to arise up for us, when wicked Men rise up against us ; let us make him our *Refuge* in all times of Distress, and then we shall be safe under the *Shadow of his Wings.* He is the God of our Salvation, and there is no Salvation in any other. The Heathens betook themselves to their dumb Idols, that had no Life nor Help in them ; and others trust in their Bow and other human Preparations, which are altogether as vain without the Divine Aid and Blessing. Let us not then fly to any indirect means for our own Safety, nor use Violence to right our selves ; for that will bring on greater Evils, than those we seek to escape : but let us refer our selves and our Cause unto God, who is the God of our Salvation, in whom all our Help and Safety lies.

And as we are to have recourse to him in all our Straits and Necessities, so are we to ascribe to him the Honour of all his Mercies and Deliverances, without taking any of the Glory of them to our selves. And this will lead me to the

Last thing propounded, viz. the Motive or Inducement, for which we ask these things : and that is, for the *Glory of his Name, and for his Mercy's sake.* Where we disclaim all Power and Ability in us to help our selves, and rely wholly upon the Divine Power and Goodness, which is express'd here by the *Glory of his Name :* we renounce likewise all Worth and Merit in our selves, as deserving nothing but Wrath and Punishment, and cast our selves entirely

tirely upon the Mercy of God and the Merits of Christ ; asking all things for his Name, or Mercy's sake. We find this Motive often mention'd and urg'd in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of *Psalms*, where *David* frequently implores Aid and Deliverance for his Name's sake.

Now the Name of God is in Scripture usually taken for his Attributes, or the Perfections of the Divine Nature ; as his Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and the like, by which he is often denominated and set forth to us. When he proclaim'd his Name to *Moses* and the *Israelites*, he did it in these words ; *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and that will by no means clear the Guilty ; but visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon the Childrens Children, unto the third and fourth Generation.* Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7. This is thy Name for ever (saith *Moses* in another Place) and this is thy Memorial unto all Generations. Now to ask any thing for the Glory of his Name, or for his Name's sake, is for the setting forth the Honour of these adorable Attributes and Perfections ; as for the magnifying of his Mercy, the exalting his Power, the extolling his Wisdom, and celebrating his Truth and Faithfulness. So we read that God help'd the *Israelites* for his Name's sake, that he might make his Power to be known, Psal. 106. 8. and elsewhere he is said to redeem his People, and to do great things for them, to make himself a Name ; 2 Sam. 7. 23. *The Lord is known* (saith the Psalmist) *by the Judgments that he executeth*, Psal. 9. 16. He rais'd up *Pharaoh* to get Glory upon him ; and by his Judgments on the *Egyptians*, he is said to get himself a Name, Neh. 9. 10. that is, to glorify his Justice, and to make his Name terrible to all impenitent Sinners. And God himself declares, that he took the *Israelites* into the Arms of his Mercy, that they might be unto him for a People, for a Name, for a Praise, and for a Glory ; Jer. 13. 11. In short, to beg Help and Assistance from God for his Name's sake, and for his Mercy's sake, is to move him to vindicate the Honour of his Power and Justice upon the Enemies of his Church, and to magnify his Mercy and Goodness in rescuing and preserving the true Members of it.

These things tend to the Glory of his Name, and will make us say with *David*, O Lord our Governour, how excellent is thy Name in all the World ? thou that hast set thy Glory above the Heavens. Psal. 8. 1, 9. Not that our vain

Breath can make any addition to his essential Glory, or render his Praises any way the more glorious, but that he is pleas'd to esteem himself glorify'd by our publishing his Praises, and by our observing, rememb'reng, and acknowledging these glorious Acts and Events of Providence, which we should do with the greatest Humility and Adoration.

We may not presume to address the Divine Majesty in our own Name, or to sue for Aid and Assistance for any Worthiness of our own, for we have none to plead; but we desire him to deliver us for his own sake, for his Name and Mercy's sake, which have been found the most powerful and prevailing Arguments.

Neither may we ascribe any thing to our selves, to whom belongs nothing but Shame and Confusion of Face, but give unto his Name all the Praise and Glory, whose Name only is wonderful; and whose Praise is above Heaven and Earth. And this we should the rather do,

(1.) Because we are call'd by his Name, being his People and Servants, and the Lot of his Inheritance: we are adopted into his Family, and having lifted our Names under him, 'tis fit we should honour and call upon that holy Name which we are call'd by,

(2.) We have trusted in his Name, and well we may, for his Name is above every Name, and all things in Heaven and Earth are to bow, and make obeysance to it; yea, there is no Name given to Man by which he can be sav'd, but that high and honourable Name: and as we may safely trust in his Name, so may we fitly pray to be deliver'd by his Name, and sav'd for his Name's sake, having been reliev'd in all that we have rely'd upon it; and so may truly say with *David*, *They that know thy Name will put their trust in thee, for thou, Lord, hast never fail'd them that seek thee*; Psal. 9. 10.

Lastly, We have spoken great things of his Name, and have had it in great veneration, and so may justly ask Help for his Name's sake, that it may not be blasphem'd among the *Gentiles*.

Thus we see the Petitions here offer'd up, viz. for Help under Troubles, and for Deliverance from them. We see likewise, the Person to whom these Petitions are presented; and that is, to the God of our Salvation, who is both able and willing to save us, in all needful times of Trouble:

as also the Motives or Arguments here us'd to enforce these Petitions; and they are, *for his Name's sake, and for his Mercy's sake.*

To draw then to a conclusion; Let us in all times of Difficulty and Distress call upon God, to arise and help us, and deliver us for his Name's sake. So we find David did, who when any Trouble drew nigh to him, constantly drew nigh unto God, and begg'd him to rise up for him, when his Enemies rose up against him. And this he did with such a firm Reliance upon his Promise, that he spake with an Air of Assurance, saying, *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion*; Psal. 102. 13. which Confidence was grounded upon those words, *I will up, saith the Lord, and help the Meek from him that swelleth against him.* By which he hath pawn'd his Word and his Honour for our Relief: and therefore under any Oppression or Persecution we may safely go to him, and say, *O Lord arise, help and deliver us, for thy Name's sake;* so shall we for ever sing Praises unto thy Name. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXXIV.

PSAL. XLIV. I.

We have heard with our Ears, O God, our Fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their days, in the times of old.

THE foregoing words of the Litany, of which I discours'd the last time, taught us to call upon God to arise, to help, and deliver us in time of Adversity, for his Name's sake. The following words, of which I am now to treat, give us sufficient grounds of Hope and Confidence in him, that he will do so, as our Necessities shall require; and we may say with the Boldness of the Psalmist, *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion, &c.* Psal. 102. 13. Which Assurance is grounded partly upon God's Promise of doing so; for he hath said, *I will arise, and will set the Needy in safety, from him that puffeth at him, or swelleth against him*; Psal. 12. 5. And partly from the

History and Experience of what he hath done in former times; and this is the Argument both of the Text and Litany: *O God, we have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have declared unto us the noble Works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.* Which words give us a good Foundation of Hope for future Favours, from the past Experience of the like in all former Ages; and so are a Commemoration of former Mercies, as an Encouragement to ask and expect Deliverance from present and future Dangers. In treating of these words, 'twill be requisite,

First, To recount some of those great Mercies and noble Works, of which David here speaks, that they had heard with their Ears, and their Fathers had told them in the times of old.

Secondly, To set before you some of those great and gracious Acts which God hath done for us of these Nations; of which we too have heard with our Ears, and our Forefathers have told us. And,

Thirdly, Shew the Obligation that lies upon us from both, to make a right use of them, together with the Ingratitude of the contrary.

I begin with those great Mercies and noble Works of which David here speaks, that they had heard with their Ears, and their Fathers had told them in the times of old. And these related chiefly to the *Israelites or Jewish Nation*, to whom God gave many signal Manifestations of his Goodness and Care of them. Among many that might be mention'd, I shall select only three of the most memorable; and they are, God's bringing them out of the hard Bondage of Egypt; his placing them in the fruitful Land of Canaan; and his many and great Deliverances of them out of the hands of their Enemies.

These were some of the noble Works that God did in the days of their Forefathers: They were at first handed down by Tradition, which made the Psalmist say, that *they heard them with their Ears*, being deliver'd by Fathers unto their Children; and that made him farther say, that *their Fathers had told and declar'd them unto them*, according to the Ordinance given unto Jacob, to teach their Children the same: *Psal. 78. 5, 6, 7.* After which, Moses recorded these

these noble Acts in writing, that they might be known to all Posterities for evermore. As,

1st, How God brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, where they were a poor, miserable, and oppressed People, labouring under an insulting Tyrant, who laid unconscionable Tasks and Burdens upon them. Their cruel Task-masters made their Lives bitter with hard Bondage, in *Mortar and in Brick*, and in all manner of Service in the Field; all their Service wherein they made them to serve, was with rigour. Exod. 1. 14. Insomuch that 'tis said, *They sigh'd and groan'd by reason of their Bondage*, Chap. 2. 23. From all this Severity and Anguish did their gracious God rescue them with a high Hand and an out-stretched Arm. Again,

2^{dly}, They heard with their Ears, and their Fathers told them, how God brought them through the Wildernes into the good Land of *Canaan*, where they were a happy People, freed from their former Servitude, and enjoying all manner of Plenty and Prosperity. The Land is describ'd to be a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, signifying it to be fruitful and abounding in all things necessary for Use or Delight. And as the Lord sent *Moses* and *Aaron* to bring them out of *Egypt*, so did he send *Caleb* and *Joshua* to conduct them into this fruitful Land of *Canaan*. There they liv'd in Plenty under their own Laws, in a wise and well-constituted Government, having the true Worship of God, and a standing Divine Service settled among them. This was a blessed Change, to exchange a House of Bondage for a Place of Liberty; and instead of the heavy Burdens and unmerciful Impositions of a Tyrant, to live under the easy and good Laws of a gracious and heavenly King.

Moreover, 3^{dly}, Their Fathers told them the many Deliverances that God wrought for them after their Settlement in that good Land; how he destroy'd or drove out the old Inhabitants of *Canaan*, to make room for them, that they might inherit there. And tho' they had many Enemies round about them, that envy'd their Happiness, were jealous of their Power, and labour'd to disturb their Peace; yet God still preserv'd and deliver'd them out of their hands: yea, tho' they contriv'd and combin'd together, either to reduce them to their old Slavery, or totally to ruin and root them out; yet as often as they rose up against them, so often did God appear in their behalf, and by strange and miraculous means defeated all their Designs, and

and deliver'd his People from all Attempts of their Power and Malice ; by which means he preserv'd their Church and State, in spite of all their Plots and Endeavours to the contrary.

These were some of the noble Works, which God commanded our Forefathers to teach their Children, that their Posterity might know it, and the Children which were yet unborn ; to the intent, that when they came up, they might shew their Children the same. And to these the Psalmist here refers, in saying, *O God, we have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us the great things thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them ; how thou hast driven out the Heathen with thy hand, and planted them in ; how thou hast destroy'd the Nations, and cast them out :* as the Psalmist enlarges in this and in many other Psalms.

These were some of the righteous Acts of the Lord, done to them and their Fathers, about which Samuel reason'd with them before the Lord, in 1 Sam. 12. 7. where he mentions their being brought out of the Bondage of Egypt, ver. 6. their being plac'd in the happy Land of Canaan, ver. 8. their Deliverances from Enemies, ver. 9, 10, 11.

And thus I have done with our first Particular ; which was to enumerate some of the noble Works that God did for his Church and People in the days of our Forefathers, and in the old time before them.

But because the same God hath done the like great things for us of these Nations, I proceed,

Secondly, To rehearse some of them, and instance in the glorious Acts of God's Power and Goodness, of which we have heard and read, and our Fathers have told us. And here if we reflect a little upon what God hath done for the Preservation of his Church, and Deliverance of his People among us ; we shall find his Mercy to be marvellous, and his Goodness abundant towards us. Indeed, whatever Mercies or Blessings any other Nations can boast of, we of this Kingdom have not come short of a good share of them : yea, if a Man would survey the World, and take an account of the State of all Peoples and Countries, this Island of our Nativity will be found the happiest ; for we have enjoy'd greater plenty of temporal and spiritual Blessings, and receiv'd more signal Marks of the Divine Favour, than any of our Neighbours round about us.

But

But because Particulars affect more than general Discourses, I shall briefly recount a few of them. And,

1st, Our Deliverance from the Bondage of *Rome*, in a great measure resembles the *Israelites* Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*: for as they groan'd under the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, and the heavy Burdens of his cruel Task-masters, so did our Fathers, both Princes and People, labour under the usurped Power of the Pope, and the Impositions of his evil Emissaries; who exercis'd an unjust Authority over our Estates, Souls, and Consciences: and both of them were Yokes, which neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear; the one enslaving the Body, and the other the Soul, to their imperious Dictates.

But thanks be to God, who put it in the Power of Princes, and into the Hearts of pious Reformers, to cast off this Yoke, to rescue us from Idolatry and Superstition, and to restore to us the true Knowldg and Worship of God.

In short, we are freed from the Slavery of our Bodies, and from the Thraldom of our Souls. Our Religion, which was blotted and defac'd by Popish Superstition, is purg'd from its Errors and Corruptions, and restor'd to us in its primitive Purity, as it was in the days of Christ and his Apostles. An invaluable Mercy and Blessing! And as God hath deliver'd us from the worse than *Egyptian* Bondage of *Rome*, so hath he,

2dly, Plac'd us in a good fruitful Land, like that of *Canaan*, flowing with Milk and Honey; the British Isles being justly reputed some of the best and happiest Soils in the World. And here I might entertain you with a large Discourse of the Fruitfulness of this our Island, whose Hills are like *Lebanon*, and her Valleys like *Eden*, her Springs as *Pisgah*, and her Rivers as *Jordan*, as one elegantly describes it; affording not only Prospect, but Profit and Pleasure, and abounding in all things necessary for the Life and Use of Man. I might mention the Wholesomeness of the Air, the Temperature of the Climate, the Health of the Inhabitants, and the warlike Dispositions of the People; things well known at home and abroad. Moreover, I might enlarge upon the happy Situation of our Island, which is walled about with the Sea, and fenc'd with the Munition of Rocks, to defend us from the Inroads of Neighbours, and the Invasions of Ambitious Princes. So that we may truly say with the Psalmist, *The Lot is fallen to us in a pleasant*

pleasant place, and we have a goodly Heritage ; living in a good Land, under a just and easy Government.

But there is one great thing more, which we have heard with our Ears, and which our Fathers have told us that God hath done for us ; and that is, The preserving and protecting our Church from the wicked and unwearied Attempts of its greatest Enemies. And of this we have had many strange and wonderful Experiments.

To go no farther back than the intended *Spanish Invasion* in the Year 88, what vast Preparations were made against us by the King of *Spain* and the Princes of *Italy*, who set forth the greatest Fleet that ever the Sea bore, styling it the *Invincible Armada*, as thinking it impossible to miscarry : yea, they presum'd so far upon the Success of their Enterprize, as to divide the Spoils of this Church and Kingdom among them. But the Winds and the Seas were on our side, and fought for us ; and God by their means brake the Force of their mighty Vessels, and scatter'd the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts.

Not long after this, a Hellish Powder-Plot was hatch'd at home, with a Design to blow up the King and the three Estates of this Realm at once, and to dispatch our Civil Government and Protestant Religion both together. But God was pleas'd in a wonderful manner to discover and defeat the intended Mischief.

In later Times, when some Rebellious and Republican Spirits had, by destroying one of the best of Kings, overturn'd the best Government in Church and State, and thereby brought Anarchy and Confusion into both ; our gracious God was pleas'd to pity the distressed and distract'd State of this Church and Kingdom, and in his good time, by restoring our natural Prince, restor'd to us our antient Government, giving us *Judges as at the first, and Counsellors as at the beginning* ; and thereby turn'd our *Captivity as the Rivers in the South.*

And very lately, when some evil Designs were form'd against our Gracious Queen and Church, and when they were just ripe for Execution ; God Almighty blasted them of a sudden, by putting it into the Queen's Heart to change her Ministry and Parliament : and thereby disappointed the *Devices of the Crafty, so that their Hands could not perform their Enterprize, taking the Wife in their own Craftiness, and turning the Counsels of the Froward headlong.* Job 5.

13, 14.

Thus

Thus we see some of those noble Works, which God did for the *Israelites* in old time, for the Christians in After-Ages, and for us in these Kingdoms in the latter days. Of the first we have heard with our Ears ; of the second our Fathers have told us ; of the last we have seen with our Eyes. From whence I proceed,

Thirdly, To the Obligation that lies upon us, on the account of all these things : and that is, to keep up a due Sense, and to make a right Use of such Mercies. For natural Justice requires, that some Return be made for Favours receiv'd ; and certain Duties in point of Equity are owing to our Friend, our Deliverer, or whosoever hath contributed any thing to the Welfare or Comfort of our Lives.

And these are in the highest measures due to the Maker and constant Preserver of our Being ; to whom our Hearts should be fill'd with Gratitude, and daily exercis'd in Acts of Thanksgiving. Our Minds should always have the Characters of Divine Goodness so deeply engraven upon them, as not to be rased out. And this grateful Sense of God's Mercies should be express'd in Acts of Love, Loyalty, and Obedience to him ; in all things submitting to his blessed Will, and devoting our selves intirely to his Service.

But the Use our Litany here teaches us to make of all the noble Works that God hath done for us or our Fathers, is to put our trust in him, and to call upon him in all our Necessities. And the Account we have of the Miracles of Mercy done by him in all Ages, may abundantly encourage us so to do ; for God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; nor can his Years, his Power, or Compassions ever fail : and we are as much his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture, as our Forefathers ; being the Children and Posterity of those, whom he hath so miraculously deliver'd.

To whom should their Children go for Help, but to the God of their Fathers ? or where should we of this Generation seek for Relief, but from him who hath signaliz'd his Power and Mercy throughout all Generations ? And therefore the Litany here directs the People to add and renew the foregoing Ejaculation ; *O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thine Honour.* We begg'd Deliverance before, for his Name's sake ; and here we ask it, for his Honour, which is in effect the same : and therefore the Psalmist

Psalmit joins them together, saying, *Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name*; Psal. 79. 9. God is honour'd, and his Name glorify'd, by our rememb'ring and rehearsing his wonderful Works; for thereby we celebrate his Praise, and declare his Power. By this the Enemies of God and his Church plainly see and own, that *the God whom we serve is able to deliver us.* Hence we find Nebuchadnezzar so far convinc'd of God's Power, by delivering the three Children out of the fiery Furnace, that he made a Decree, that none should speak amiss of this God, upon pain of being cut in pieces; for there is no other God that can deliver after this sort; Dan. 3. 29. Now this bringing Glory to God, we use it as a Motive to deliver us for the Support of his Honour: for if he defend us, our greatest Enemies will be forc'd to see and acknowledg his Glory; but if he forsake and leave us in their hands, they will insult and say, *Where is now their God?* And therfore we pray God to arise, to help, and deliver us for his Honour; which will be promoted by our Deliverance, and be polluted by our Defeat.

Upon the whole then, let us often meditate upon and speak of the wondrous Works of God, that were done in the times of old, and which our Fathers have told us, what we have heard with our Ears, and seen with our Eyes, that we may learn to call and rely upon him in all our Extremities; so shall we find him ever ready to hear and help us. *Who so is wise will ponder these things, and he shall understand the Loving-kindness of the Lord.*

For the *Gloria Patri* that follows, see before.



DISCOURSE XXXV.

PSAL. XX. i.

The Lord hear thee in the day of Trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee.

FTER the *Gloria Patri*, here us'd as an Act of Praise and Thanksgiving for the noble Works mention'd before, as done in the Days of our Forefathers, for a Memorial to future Generations; after this, I say, there follow some short Prayers or pious Ejaculations, deliver'd by Minister and People: which being much to the same purpose, I shall here handle them together.

And the First of these is for Defence against Enemies, in these words; *From our Enemies defend us, O Christ.* To which the People answer, *Graciously look upon our Affliction.* Where we have two Petitions, the one for Defence against Enemies; the other for a gracious Eye upon our Afflictions. And both directed to our Saviour Christ, who came to save us from the one, and to take pity upon the other.

For Defence against Enemies, that is so frequent a Petition of David in the Book of Psalms, from whence ours is taken, that it would be endless, as well as needless, to recite the many Places where it is found. Now the Enemies we pray to be defended from, are both spiritual and temporal.

The spiritual Enemies are Sin, Satan, Death and Hell; which are all our deadly Foes, and lie in wait for our Souls.

Our temporal Enemies are such malicious and mischievous Persons, who seek to hurt us in our Bodies, Estates, or good Names, of which this wicked World abounds with too many.

From all these, the Divine Power and Providence is the best Protection, and Prayer is the best means to engage these in our Defence. Hence the Psalmist often styles God *his Rock and House of Defence, his Castle, his Refuge, and strong*

Strong Tower, to which we may always resort. But more particularly, we are to address to the Son of God, and our Blessed Saviour, who came into the World on purpose to deliver us from our Enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. He hath promis'd to be our Helper and Defender, and he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him ; and therefore we may safely rely upon his Succour, and say, *From our Enemies defend us, O Christ.* To which the People add, *And graciously look upon our Afflictions.* Which words are taken out of *Exod. 2. 25.* where God is said to *look down on the Children of Israel, and to have respect unto them* ; i. e. he cast a gracious Eye upon them, and deliver'd them from their hard Bondage : which they after turn'd into a Petition, saying, *Look down from thy Holy Habitation, and bless thy People Israel ; Deut. 26. 15.* The Eye is known to be the Inlet to the Heart, and stirs up all the Passions of the Soul ; what we see, is wont to affect us more than what we hear ; and a Person or Thing out of sight, is often out of mind. And therefore when we desire any Favour from any, we pray him to look upon us, and to cast a favourable eye towards us. Accordingly, speaking of God after the manner of Men, which is usual in Scripture, we pray him to look upon our Affliction, and that not with a slight transient View, but with a steady and favourable Eye : *Look graciously upon our Afflictions :* that is, so to look upon them, as to support us under them, or rid us from them ; not to see us groan under them without Succour or Relief, but in his due time to put an end to them, and exchange them for Ease and Happiness. When God rescu'd the *Israelites* from their Miseries in *Egypt*, he is said to *look down from Heaven, and behold from the Habitation of his Holiness* ; *Isa. 63. 15.* And *Agar* comforted her self in her Affliction, because God was pleas'd to look with a gracious Eye upon her, *Gen. 16. 13.* and this is what we here ask, in saying, *Graciously look upon our Affliction.*

Much to the same purpose is the next Ejaculation, wherein the Minister is order'd to say, *Pitifully behold the Sorrows of our Hearts ;* and the People to answer, *Mercifully forgive the Sins of thy People.* Both which are taken out of the twenty fifth Psalm, where *David* complains in the 16th Verse, that *the Sorrows of his Heart were enlarg'd* ; and prays, *O bring thou me out of my Troubles.* And in the

17th Verse adds, *Look upon my Adversity and Misery, and forgive me all my Sin.* Sorrow and Grief of Heart are the natural Effects of Affliction; for no Chastisement for the present is joyous, but grievous. And both are the necessary Consequents and Wages of Sin, for that is the Inlet and Cause of all our Miseries. So that Pity is the best Relief for the one, and Pardon for the other.

18th, then, We are here taught to pray to God, *Pitifully to behold the Sorrows of our Heart.* By *Sorrow of Heart* (faith Solomon, Prov. 15. 13.) the Spirits are broken: and a wounded Spirit who can bear? Chap. 18. 14. When the Prop fails; the Fabrick falls, and many have sunk under the Burden of their Sorrows. In such Cases nothing affords greater Comfort and Support than an Eye of Pity and Compassion, to find others to behold our Misery with a tender Affection, and by Sympathy to bear a part with us. But alas! Men may pity, but cannot relieve; they may compassionate our Sorrows, but are unable to remove them: they are oft-times but broken Reeds, and miserable Comforters, that may not safely be rely'd upon. But God is a sure Refuge in time of Trouble, he hath the Balm of Gilead to cure a wounded Spirit, and his Grace is sufficient to help and heal all our Infirmitie. And therefore we desire him pitifully to behold the Sorrows of our Heart, who is alone able to see and to remove them. And that we may the better obtain this Hearts-ease, we pray him,

2dly, *Mercifully to forgive the Sins of his People.* Sin is the Cause of all our Sorrows and Sufferings; 'tis that raiseth Enemies, and creates all outward Troubles; and 'tis that damps our Joys, and occasions all inward Sorrows. So that the chief Remedy against these Sufferings, is the Pardon and Forgiveness of our Sins: for as the Effect ceaseth upon the removing of the Cause, so would our Sorrows soon end, if our Sins were done away; and that can only be, by the Pardon and Remission of them. And therefore we beg here the Forgiveness of Sins, that God may pity, and remove from us the Sorrows of our Hearts; and this we beg of him, who hath purchas'd for us the Remission of Sins, and hath the sole Power of pardoning; namely, our blessed Saviour, who made his Soul an Offering for Sin, and shed his Blood for our Redemption. And this we are the more embolden'd to ask, because we are his People; *Forgive the Sins of thy People.*

We are his People in Covenant with him, he hath given us the Adoption of Sons, and enabled us to cry, *Abba Father*; Rom. 8. yea, Christ is said to give himself for us, to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar People; Tit. 2. 14. And being his People, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to obtain Pardon, and find Grace to help in time of need; Heb. 4. 16. especially when we come, as with the Confidence, so with the Duty and Devotion of Children; not pleading any Merits or Worthiness of our own, but casting our selves wholly upon his Mercy and Goodness; saying, as our Church hath taught us, *Mercifully forgive the Sins of thy People.* Which is the second Ejaculation.

The Third is, *Favourably with Mercy hear our Prayers*, pronounc'd by the Minister: to which the People reply, *O Son of David, have mercy upon us.* For the first, The Minister having before ask'd Pity and Pardon for all God's People, which is the best Stay and Cordial for a fainting Soul, he next begs for a favourable Audience of their Prayers; saying, *Favourably with Mercy hear our Prayers.* The Words are taken out of the 33d Chapter of Job, ver. 26. *He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his Face with Joy.* Where God promises to lend a propitious Ear to the Prayers of his People, and to answer them with the Joy of his Countenance. Which Promise is here turn'd into a Prayer, that he would be pleas'd favourably and with Mercy to hear our Petitions. That we all stand in need of Favour, our manifold Iniquities may easily convince us; for should God deal in rigour with us, and exact from us the utmost Strictness and Severity of his Laws, we could expect nothing but the doleful Sentence of Condemnation: yea, that our very Prayers require Mercy and Pardon, the many Infirmities that attend them may fully satisfy us. For beside the bad things of our Lives, which are too many to be thought of without Repentance and Remorse; there are those Imperfections cleaving to our holy things, that instead of Acceptance and a Smile, deserve nothing but Frowns and Repulses. So that our only Refuge must be to Mercy and Favour: to which the Peoples Answer lead us in the

Next words, *O Son of David, have mercy upon us.* These words are taken out of St. Matthew, Chap. 9. ver. 27. & Chap. 20. ver. 30, 31. where we read of two blind Men following our Saviour, crying after him, and saying, *Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us.* Where we may observe, first, the Title given to him, viz. *Thou Son of David;* and next, the Request made to him, which was to *have Mercy upon them.*

For the Title, the promis'd *Messiah* was foretold and expected to come from the Seed of *Abraham*, and the Stock of *David*, Heb. 2. 16. Accordingly our Saviour Christ was own'd and receiv'd as descending from both, Mat. 22. 42. And these two blind Men, tho' they could not see him with their bodily Eyes, did yet by the Eyes of their Faith discern him to be the true *Messias* and Saviour of the World; and therefore call'd upon him by the Name of the *Son of David.* The Request they made to him, was for Mercy; *Have mercy upon us.* The particular Mercy they requested, was to cure their Blindness, and open their Eyes, which they firmly believ'd the *Messiah* could do; and being of the Stock and Linage of holy *David*, they presum'd him to be as willing, as able to do it for them: And therefore doubled and trebled their Request to him, saying again and again, *Thou Son of David have mercy upon us.* And when the *Multitude* rebuk'd them, that they should hold their peace, they cry'd out the more, saying, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* Mat. 20. 30, 31, 32, &c. And our Saviour was so far from blaming their Importunity, that he commended their Faith, granted their Request, and restor'd their Sight. This may teach and encourage us, whenever any Trouble or Affliction is upon us, to go unto Jesus, and to cry mightily unto him for Mercy; not ceasing our Suit, till, with these blind Men in the Gospel, we obtain our Request, and by their Example go away praising and glorifying God. And this we are farther taught to do in the following Ejaculation, which is,

Fourthly, In these words; *Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ;* utter'd by the Minister: to which the People answer; *Graciously hear us, O Christ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ.* These words are taken out of sundry places in *David's Psalms*, and in them we may consider,

1st, The Thing ask'd for, and that is the hearing and accepting our Prayers.

2dly, The Person of whom 'tis ask'd, and that is of Christ; *Hear us, O Christ;* and *bear us, O Lord Christ.*

3dly, The Times of asking it; and that is, Both now and ever. And,

4thly, The Manner or Motive of asking it; and that is, from mere Grace and Favour; *Graciously hear us, O Christ;* *graciously bear us, O Lord Christ.* Of each of which briefly.

And, 1st, Of the Thing ask'd for; and that is, the hearing and accepting our Prayers. Without this, all our Prayers will be to no purpose; they will vanish into empty Air, and bring down a Curse rather than a Blessing. And therefore we find the Psalmist often saying, *Have mercy upon me, O God, and hearken unto my Prayer;* Psal. 4. 1. intimating, that 'tis one of the greatest Acts of God's Mercy, to lend a merciful Ear to our Prayers. 'Twas a direful Symptom of his Displeasure against the Jews, in saying, *When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you; when ye make many Prayers, I will not hear;* Isa. 1. 15. When he turns the deaf ear to our Calls, we must be in a hopeless and helpless Condition; and when our Prayers, instead of finding Acceptance, are an Abomination to him, we are consign'd over to Misery and Destruction. And therefore we cannot be too importunate with him to open his Ears to our Cries, and to hear us when we call upon him. To which end, we must take care that our Prayers be duly qualify'd to gain Acceptance, that they be offer'd up in Faith, and made in Truth and Sincerity; else we cannot expect that they should be heard or answer'd.

But to whom must our Prayers be directed, to obtain Audience? That is the next thing to be consider'd; to wit, the Person to whom our Prayers are to be offer'd: and that is Christ; *Hear us, O Christ;* and, *Hear us, O Lord Christ.* He is the sole Mediator between God and us, 1 Tim. 2. 5. that purchas'd our Peace, procur'd our Pardon, and can alone prevail for Audience to our Prayers: 'tis thro his Merits and Mediation alone, that we are to make known our Requests unto God; he must perfume our Prayers with the Incense of his Intercession, before they can ascend up to Heaven, or yield a sweet Savour in the Nostrils

Nostrils of God. We may not address to Saints or Angels, or put any confidence in Creatures, for they can neither hear nor help us. Our only Application must be to our Advocate at God's right Hand, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 John 2. 1, 2. and the sole successful Presenter of our Prayers. From whence I proceed to consider,

3dly, The Times when we are to ask this Audience to our Petitions; and that is, both now and ever: *Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ.* That is, that he would be propitious to our present Petitions, and likewise hear us at all times hereafter. As we are commanded to *pray always, and without ceasing;* so are we to desire God to hear us always, and never cease to answer us, when we call upon him. Our Wants daily grow and increase upon us, and we stand in continual need of the Divine Aid and Assistance; and therefore we beseech him never to hide his Face, or withhold his Ear from us, but to be now and ever ready to incline his Ear, and hearken to our Prayers.

And that not for any Merits of ours, but from the Motive of his own Grace and Favour; which leads us to the Manner of asking it, imply'd in these words, *Graciously hear us, O Christ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ:* which is no vain Repetition, as some would have it, but an earnest and importunate Request of a pious and longing Soul, proceeding from a deep Sense of its Want and Unworthiness of it. In like manner we here ask Audience with hearty and reiterated Expressions, relying only upon God's Grace and Mercy to grant it to us.

There remains one short Ejaculation more to the same effect, in these words; *O Lord, let thy Mercy be shew'd upon us, as we do put our Trust in thee:* the former words are a Petition utter'd by the Priest, the latter a Motive urg'd by the People; and both are taken out of the 33d Psalm, ver. 22. *Let thy merciful Kindness, O Lord, be upon us, like as we do put our Trust in thee,*

For the first, we pray'd before that God would have mercy upon us, for our own Comfort and Satisfaction; and here we pray that his Mercy may be shew'd upon us, for the Conviction and Satisfaction of others. So David begg'd some visible Sign of God's Mercy, not only to signify this

his Prayers were heard, but that his Enemies might be satisfy'd. *Show some token upon me for good* (saith he, Psal. 86. 17.) *that they who hate me may see it and be ashamed*, because thou, Lord, hast holpen me and comforted me. When the Righteous are in trouble, the Wicked are apt to insult, and say, *Where is now their God?* And therefore he prays for some signal Mark and Token of his Favour, for the Conviction and Confusion of his Enemies; and this he would have so visible, that all who see it may say, *This hath God done, and perceive it to be his Work*, Psal. 64. 9.

The like Instances of Mercy we desire may be shew'd upon us, as occasion shall require; and that because we cannot do it for our selves, but our Hope and Trust is in his Power and Goodness: which is the Motive here urg'd, *Like as we do put our Trust in thee*. Where we crave for Mercy, not because we deserve it, or that God is bound to bestow it, but because we think him alone able to give it, and so rely intirely upon him for it. To claim it by way of Merit, or to think by our own Power to effect it, is the ready way to go without it. We must be first sensible of our own Inability and Unworthiness, and depend wholly upon his Grace and Goodness; and then he will never fail them that seek and put their trust in him: which that you may never cease to do, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*



D I S-

DISCOURSE XXXVI.

ROMANS viii. 26.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our Infirmitieſ; for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us with Groanings that cannot be utteřd.

AFTER some ſhort Ejaculations, for Defence againſt Enemies, for hearing our Prayers, and forgiuing our Sins; there follows, in the Close of the Litany, a larger Prayer for Aid and Aſſiſtance under Infirmitieſ; uſher'd in by that frequent Call or Exhortation, *Let us pray,* uſ'd partly to excite our Attention, and partly to renew and change our Devotion from alternate Petitions between Minister and People, to a continu'd Prayer by the Minister alone. And of this kind is the following Collect, in theſe words; *We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our Infirmitieſ, &c.* of which I am now to ſpeak from theſe words of the Apostle, *The Spirit also helpeth our Infirmitieſ; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit makes Interceſſion for us, &c.* Where the Infirmitieſ mention'd both in the Text and Collect, relate chiefly to our Infirmitieſ in Prayer, and the Iniquities of our Holy Things: and therefore in ſpeaking to them I shall obſerve,

First, The Aſſiſtance that God's Holy Spirit gives us in our Prayers, together with the Manner of it, from theſe words; *The Spirit also helpeth our Infirmitieſ.*

Secondly, Our own Inability to pray aright, both for the Matter and Manner of it; *For we know not what to pray for as we ought.*

To aſſist us in both, the Collect teaches us humbly to beſeech our Heavenly Father,

1ſt, Mercifully to look upon our Infirmitieſ, and to turn from us all those Evils, which we have maſt righteouſly deſeru'd.

2dly, In all our Troubles to rely not upon our best Performances, but to put our whole Trust and Confidence in God's Mercy.

3dly, To make these Petitions effectual ; Evermore to serve him in Holiness and Pureness of living, to the Honour and Glory of his Name, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Of which particularly.

And, First, Of the Assistance that the Holy Spirit of God gives in Prayer, for the Spirit is here said to help our Infirmitieſ. We have indeed ſome natural Infirmitieſ, as Sickneſſes and Weakneſſes, which neceſſarily attend our mortal State ; being liable to many Distempers of Body, and Discompoſures of Mind, in which our Saviour himſelf, as Man, is ſaid to have a ſhare : for we have not an High-Priest (ſaith the Apostle, Heb. 4. 15.) that is not touched with the Feeling of our Infirmitieſ, but was in all points tempted or try'd like as we are. Against these, God himſelf hath ſecur'd to us a Remedy ; for God is faithful (ſaith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 10. 13.) who will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the tryal make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. We have like-wiſe ſome moral Infirmitieſ, as Defects in our Understanding, Disorders in our Will and Affections ; which lead us into great Irregularities in point of Practice, and oft-times hinder in doing our Duty both to God and Man. Against these we are assisted by God's holy Word and Sacraments, and the Influences of his Grace that attends them.

But the Infirmitieſ here principally intended, are ſuch as relate to Prayer, and the many Imperfections that cleave to our holy Duties ; ſuch as Dulneſſe and Deadneſſe in our Devotion, Careleſſneſſ in hearing of God's Word, and receiving his holy Sacraments : and againſt these chiefly it is, that the Spirit is here ſaid to help our Infirmitieſ.

But how doth the Spirit help our Infirmitieſ in Prayer, and in ſuch Religious Exercises ? Why, not as ſome would have it, by ſupplying us with new Words and vary'd Phraſes in the Performance of them, which are no way pleaſing unto God ; but by stirring up new, hearty, and zealous Affections, which are highly grateful and acceptable to him. So the Text tells, 'tis by making Interceſſions for us with Groanings that cannot be utter'd ; that is, by inspiring

inspiring us with those high and holy Affections, that are too big for Words, and are accepted of God as the pious Breathings of a devout Soul; which because we cannot of our selves attain to, the Holy Spirit of God is pleas'd to work in us. And this will lead me to consider,

Secondly, Our own Inability to pray aright, either for the Matter or Manner of it; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Our Ignorance of what to pray for, makes us sometimes to ask things, that are neither agreeable to the Will of God, nor suitable to our own Wants and Necessities; desiring things that would be more for our Hurt, than our Welfare; and so the Mercy is greater in the Denial, than in the Grant of them. Again, our Ignorance in praying even for good things as we ought, makes us sometimes err in the manner of our Prayers; being too cold, indevout, and insincere in our Petitions: and in both cases, we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss; James 4. 3. not to increase our Love to God, but to consume it upon our Lusts.

Now in these Cases the Spirit of God helpeth our Infirmitie, by directing us both in the Matter and Manner of our Prayers: and tho' of our selves we cannot ask aright in either, yet by this we are so assisted in both, that our Prayers ascend like Incense, and yield a sweet-smelling Savour in the Nostrils of God.

For the Matter of Prayer, we are abundantly assisted by the Lord's Prayer, which contains all things necessary both for our Souls and Bodies, as also all things profitable for the Life that now is, and that which is to come.

For the Manner of our Prayers, our Saviour likewise hath plainly instructed us, saying in St. Matthew, *After this manner pray ye, Mat. 6. 9.* or as St. Luke hath it, *When ye pray, say, (that is, these Words, or this Form) Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. Luke 11. 2.* He doth not put us upon the inventing of new Words, or varying Phrases, as some do their Disciples; but wills us to use this absolute and perfect Form in all our Addresses to Heaven, which if offer'd up with hearty Desires and ardent Affections, will surely find Acceptance there.

Now from our own Inability to pray aright, and from the Assistance that the Spirit of God is pleas'd to give us therein; our Church in this Collect of the Litany teaches

teaches us humbly to beseech our Heavenly Father, *first, Mercifully to look upon our Infirmitieſ.* This is elsewhere express'd by looking upon them with the Eyes of his Mercy; which is, to behold them with Pity and Relief, and is a Phrase very significant: “For to look or set our Eyes upon any, is to shew a dear Affection to them, and to take a more especial Care of them; for we are wont to look often upon those whom we love or commis-
“rate.” Hence we read, that the Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, but his Face is set against them that do Evil; 1 Pet. 3. 12. meaning, that he favours the one, and frowns upon the other.

Indeed, this Petition for God’s looking down from Heaven, and from the Habitation of his Throne, is often found in Holy Scripture. Moses us’d this Form in the behalf of the Israelites under their hard Bondage, Deut. 26. 15. and Isaiah did the same in a time of great Distress, Isa. 63. 15. in both which places they desire God to look down from Heaven, and to behold them from the Habitation of his Holiness and Glory, to bless his People, and to assist them in all their Exigencies. From whence it hath been taken into all the antient Liturgies, as it is in ours to this day; wherein we beseech God to look upon our Infirmitieſ, that is, with an Eye of Pity and Compassion to help and relieve them. We read elsewhere of an angry Look, wherewith God beholds the Wicked; Exod. 14. 24. and he is said to behold the Proud afar off, that is, with Frowns and Disdain, and with no other design but to humble and depress him. But here we beg for a merciful Look, to assist and accept our Prayers, notwithstanding the many Failings and Imperfections that attend them.

2dly, We here beseech God to turn from us all those Evils which we most righteously have deserv’d. The Evils that we have deserv’d are many and great; we feel and groan under the weight of some, and we have just reason to fear much worse; for our Iniquities are gone over our heads, and the Cry of them is enter’d into the Ears of the Lord of Hosts. Our Sins of Weakness and Infirmity are very numerous, and our Sins of Wilfulness and Presump-
tion are much more heinous and provoking; and both justly deserve and draw down the evil Effects of God’s Dis-
pleasure; and therefore we have great reason to pray him to divert and turn them from us.

But perhaps the Evils here mainly intended, are those that proceed from the Iniquities of our holy things, or the Imperfections that attend our best Performances ; such as the Dulness and Deadness of our Devotion, the Neglect or Contempt of God's Holy Ordinances, our Barrenness and Unfruitfulness under the Means of Grace, and the like ; all which, instead of meriting a Reward, deserve the severest Judgments that can befall us, which we may therefore very well beseech God to remove and avert from us. To which end we are here taught to acknowledg, that *we most righteously deserve all those Evils* which we either feel or fear ; yea, those which we pray against, may justly light upon us, for we have violated the Laws of our Maker in Thought, Word, and Deed, and have highly offended him, even when we pretend to serve him : insomuch that should he give us the Desert of our best Works, our Wages would be nothing but Misery, and the worst of Evils ; which made it necessary, in the close of the Litany, to put up this Petition, that *God would turn from us all those Evils that we most righteously have deserv'd.*

3dly, We pray him for Grace in all our Troubles, to rely not on our own Merits, but to put our whole Trust and Confidence in his Mercy. The Prophet Iсаiah compares our Righteousness to no better things than *filthy Rags and menstrual Cloths*, things nauseous and loathsome, that rather beget Abhorrence, than find Acceptance with any. And the Evangelist tells us, that when *we have done our best, we are but unprofitable Servants*. So that we cannot safely put our Trust in any thing that we do, but we may securely repose our Confidence in God, whose Power and Goodness can never fail us. And we pray here for Grace to be enabled so to do ; for if we let go our Trust and Confidence in God, we have nothing to support or comfort us ; Grief and Despair must break in upon us, we have lost our Prop, and so must sink and fall into Misery : But while we retain our Hope and Confidence in God's Mercy, we may remain as unshaken as a Rock ; for nothing can hurt us, while *our Heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.*

Moreover, we are taught here to put our whole Trust and Confidence in God's Mercy ; for some (as one hath observ'd) put but one half of their Confidence in God, and place the other half, if not more, in other things : *Some put their Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses.* (saith the Psalmist)

mist) but we will trust in the Name of the Lord our God. Some trust in uncertain Riches more than in the living God, making Gold their Hope, and saying to the fine Gold, *thou art my Confidence*; Job 31. 24. Others again trust in their Power, and Policy, and warlike Preparations, more than in the Lord of Hosts: Such as these divide between God and Mammon, and for not putting their whole Trust and Confidence in God, must expect no help from him. Let us not then in time of Sickness, like Asa, seek more to the Physicians, than to the Lord, 2 Chron. 16. 12. nor in any Distress fly to Saints and Angels, who have no help in them; but let us, in all our Troubles, put our whole Trust and Confidence in God's Mercy.

Lastly, We pray here that we may evermore serve him in Holiness and Purity of Living. To the Petition for Grace to trust wholly in God, there follows another for Holiness and Purity of Life, without which all our Trust and Confidence in him, will be no better than Vanity and Presumption: for to rely upon God, without obeying and doing his Will, is in effect to defy and affront him; and therefore our Faith in him must be founded in Holiness, and accompani'd with Purity of Living, to make it firm and effectual to us.

Now to serve God in Holiness, is to worship him with a true Heart in Soundness and Sincerity. To serve him in Purity of Living, is to lead Lives agreeable to our Profession, and to adorn the Doctrine of the Gospel with a suitable Conversation. And this we pray may be done evermore; that is, both in a prosperous and adverse Condition. Some in Adversity are apt enough to stoop and call upon God, when Trouble lies hard upon them, who yet in Prosperity soon forget him, and with *Jesurun* lift up the Heel against him; and therefore we pray here to be kept steddy in the Faith, and stedfast in our Devotion, that no Temptations may be strong enough to draw us from our Master's Service, but that we may evermore serve him in Holiness and Purity of Living. And this we beg of him for his Honour and Praise, and for the Glory of his Name: which will lead us,

4tably, To the Ground and Motive of these our Requests; and they are not for any Merits or Deserts in our selves, but purely for God's Honour and Glory. Herein is my Father glorify'd (saith our Saviour) that ye bear much Fruit;

John

John 15. 8. *And the Fruits of Righteousness* (saith the Apostle) *redound to the Praise and Glory of God*; Phil. 1. 12. This is what God Almighty propounds to himself in all his Works, and this is what we are to aim at in all our Actions: *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do* (saith St. Paul) *do all to the Praise and Glory of God*; 1 Cor. 10. 31. Hence our Church here teaches to pray God *mercifully to look upon our Infirmities*, for the Honour of his Power, which is magnify'd in our Weaknesses, and in helping to do that for us, which we cannot do of our selves. Again, we desire him to turn from us all the Evils which we have righteously deserved, for the Glory of his Name; which is mightily set forth, by averting of all Evils, and bestowing all manner of Good: for both which we cannot pretend to the least Deserts. Farther, we beseech God to grant, that in all our Troubles we may put our whole Trust and Confidence in him, for the Honour of his Mercy; which is highly advanc'd by his seasonable Support and Relief in all our Necessities. And, Lastly, we beg, that we may evermore serve him in Holiness and Purity of Living, for the Honour and Glory of his Grace, which is alone sufficient to enable us so to do: All which tend to the setting forth the Praises of our Maker, and are for the Glory of all his Attributes. The holy Lives of God's Servants are much for the Honour of their Master, for they declare the Excellency of his Service, together with the present Safety and future Felicity that attend it: Which things let us therefore earnestly beg of our Heavenly Father, and that thro' our only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ our Lord; the last thing to be consider'd, viz.

The Means of obtaining the Divine Blessings, and receiving the Return and Success of our Prayers, and that is, thro the sole Mediation and Intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. Such is our great Unworthiness, that we dare not ask any thing in our own Name; for we cannot claim or deserve the least Favour at God's hands, we are less than the least of all his Mercies, and worthy of the severest of all his Judgments. All the way that we can make to the Throne of Grace, must be thro the Merits and Mediation of his only Son our Saviour: He is the sole Mediator between God and Man, to present our Petitions for us; and he is our only Advocate, to plead our Cause in the Court of Heaven: there is none so able, and none so ready to intercede

tercede for us, and indeed none so prevalent with the Father as his only beloved Son, who hath made our Peace, and satisfy'd for all our Iniquities. To him therefore let all our Recourse, and upon him let all our Reliance be ; and then we shall find both our Persons accepted, and our Prayers answer'd, to the Glory of his Name, and the Happiness of our own Souls : Which God grant, for the Merits of this our powerful Intercessor. Amen.

The concluding Prayer of St. Chrysostom, with the Blessing that follows it, are explain'd and handled in the close of the Morning-Prayer ; to which therefore I refer the Reader.

The End of the Second Volume.

